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STARBURST



LEGENDS

- ◆ Mad Max III
- ◆ Ridley Scott's Legend
- ◆ Beauty & the Beast
- ◆ Man from U.N.C.L.E.

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Heroes and heroines of cinematic 'fairyland' seem very much in vogue these days, what with the big budget likes of *Ladyhawke*, *Return to Oz* and *Legend* recently being produced. Maybe the vogue is a symptom of the cliché-ridden mentality of much of today's news media. It's reflected in a lot of recent filmmaking and TV – a cultural paralysis which has often manifested itself as an impulsive urge to scratch its Bridesheads rather than squeezing them. We have cast anxious glances over the chip on our shoulder and felt the loss of Imperial épaulette. Old styles and values have been paraded before us for example in the Raj revival – a search for some kind of cultural meaning for the Eighties, playfully clothed in soap-operatics.

VALUE ADDED TALES

Witches, dragons, gods, heroes and heroines have different values according to the way they are applied to everyday life. A new generation will inherit the cultural values of its predecessor to the extent that symbols of 'good' and 'evil' are treated as 'real'. In the west, myths and fairy stories are today regarded just as kids' stuff – outside adult 'reality'. In the same way, much tribal culture was seen, until more enlightened times, as 'primitive' and 'barbaric'. But there's no intrinsic difference between fairy tales and the stories passed on from elders to youths in tribal groups. Stories reflect the cultural maturity of a society to the extent that they order imagination to produce acceptable codes of behaviour. Shakespeare used fairy tales as source material for his plays, but our attitudes to magic and witchcraft are very different nowadays to those of the Sixteenth Century. Jean Cocteau also understood the interplay of values underlying the emblematic fairy tale, and *Beauty and the Beast* is a testament to his scrupulous honesty – a quality badly needed by filmmakers in a cultural/symbol choked world of video pop-corn.

Malcolm Smith

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PLUS

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FEEDBACK

FAN FEVER

A terrible disease is spreading amongst science fiction fans; a disease that attacks fans who over-indulge their worship of a particular TV show or movie, and it always has the same horrifying effect. They become totally unable to accept the fact that there are people who doesn't like their favourite movie or TV show.

Some of the victims of this disease have letters published in your magazine, and each time it is to complain that another reader or one of your writers who has voiced a negative opinion about a movie or a TV show. Two examples:

In issue 78 a Ms Hilary Broadribb complains that nobody has "the right to vilify *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA*..." She makes this statement after having pointed out that it is part of basic human rights to have our individual likes and dislikes!

In issue 80, a Mr Nicholas Penn, in commenting on Alan Jones review of *Supergirl* states that "... there is no need to totally obliterate a film just because you don't happen to like it..." What does he want? Reviewers praising a rotten movie?

Furthermore he goes on to state: "Please don't ram your likes and dislikes so forcibly down our throats! As if somebody forces your readers to read the reviews!"

The worst example of all is from a *Star Trek* fan in issue 83, who in commenting on a letter from a Mr Nicholas Hill in issue 81, demonstrates a very arrogant attitude towards people who don't have the same opinions that he has. In other words people who don't like *Star Trek*. Worst of all he compares this TV show to the Mona Lisa and The Bible! I hurt my sides laughing. When I had stopped laughing I became pretty



Captain Kirk (William Shatner) eye-balls over a pair of horns with alien Akuta (Keith Andres) in the Star Trek episode 'The Apple'. Is this the discerning SF fan's favourite fare?

sad though, and I asked myself: Why is this sort of fanaticism wasted on an over-rated TV show?

Worst of all, he has the audacity to insinuate that Mr Hill is a communist (he suggests that he should be reading *Pravda*), and also that he is mentally retarded. This made me throw up my hands in despair.

Can't a person voice his opinion without being accused of being either retarded or an enemy of the state? What's next? Public executions of people who

don't like *Doctor Who*? Hangings of *Blakes*' 7 haters?

Life would be a lot easier for these fanatics if they remembered one thing: Nobody's opinion matters but your own.

No matter how well made a movie or a TV show is, there will always be someone who doesn't like it. It's a fact that is impossible to change, because that's how the world is: We are not all people with the same opinion. Don't take your pet subject so seriously, after all, it's only a movie or a TV-show or a book etc. *Star*

Trek, *Doctor Who*, *Battlestar Galactica*, etc. are not immortal works of art that are going to change the world.

Soren Thomas,
Copenhagen, Denmark.

STANDING FOR THE COMMON MAN

Thanks for the long-awaited coverage of *V* in issue 85. Great cover guys, very eye-catching.

It's nice to see you giving even further coverage to *V*

including the excellent, behind-the-scenes exposé by Richard Marson, and Richard Holliss' review of the series in *TV Zone*. Now, I don't exactly disagree with his views / criticisms of the series – I'm a big fan myself – but Richard Holliss, how can you possibly find the character of Robin (played by Blair Teflein) obnoxious? Of all the things Robin might be – and whining, insecure and adolescent are a couple of them – I would hardly go as far as to say she's obnoxious. The series writers are obviously having a hard time writing scenes for Tefkin's character. She can't even play a "normal" mother to Elizabeth, since her daughter's metamorphosed from a six-year-old to "adult" in the series opening episode.

Robin Maxwell is no gun-totting heroine, like Julie Parrish, but then she's no blonde bombshell, there to be "rescued" every week. Robin's just an ordinary young woman, who was used as a pawn by the Visitors at the start of the war, and now has to live with the consequences, as her friends and relations fight, even die.

Robin is not such an obvious stereotype as Mike Donovan and Co. All that macho dialogue gets extremely boring after a while. But then, I guess, boys will be boys.

A Robin fan
Scarborough, N. Yorks.

FANTASTIC VOYAGE

Many thanks to Jon Abbott for his comprehensive article on *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* SB84, which was most informative.

At the moment, *Voyage* is being shown on Saturday mornings on our own TV network.

Here's a couple of points about *Voyage* I thought I'd mention;

1. Did anyone ever notice the way the stuntmen in *Voyage* usually bear no resemblance to the original characters (Those used for the fight scenes between Nelson and Crane especially – They were usually about 20 pounds

heavier, different hair-styles, etc.)

Of course, *Voyage* isn't the only series where this was obvious – *Star Trek* was notorious for this.

2. I always thought it was annoying the way only the lead roles ever got any lines. When Kowalski or someone was organising a search-party, the others in the said scene mostly just stood around looking embarrassed. Even an occasional 'Come on, 'Ski' would have made these scenes more plausible.

3. Poor old Sharkey got a rough time of it in general. He was the one most willing to join in a fight. Most of the time though he was knocked out with the first punch thrown at him. I'd say he spend most of his time on *Voyage* staring at the ceiling.

Finally, *Voyage* was indeed a very enjoyable series from Irwin Allen. Hopefully we'll see an article about his *Time Tunnel* before long. Great magazine, chaps – never miss it.

David M. Roche
Dublin, Eire.

HORROR FAN

It always seems to me that when a director of horror films is interviewed he is planning to leave the genre which is his home.

If this keeps happening we won't have a decent horror director churning out films every year or so, instead it will dwindle to no hopers who think they can rip off any film to make a quick buck. Examples of this happening include John Landis, who could have done great things with fantasy and horror, but instead drifted elsewhere. John Carpenter, after making several classics like *Halloween*, *The Fog* and *The Thing*, decided to do a piece of science fiction clap trap like *Starman*.

But the director whom it pains me the most to see changing is Brian De Palma. Classics like *Carrie*, and *Sisters* are brushed aside, and his fans are left high and dry, with *Scarface* and *Body Double*.

My second moan is that when a director of high esteem like David

Cronenberg directs a film like *Dead Zone*, it's not advertised as a Stephen King horror novel. Like the film *Fires-tarter*, it is a so-called non-horror film.

Finally as a devoted horror fan, I congratulate Starburst on keeping us up to date on what's happening on this side of the shore.

T.W. Cotterell,
Bristol.

VANISHING SWORD

I have just seen Stephen Weeks' latest film *Sword of the Valiant*, which was given a sarcastic preview in SB70. I must say, that despite what I was led to believe by the article, it proved to be a very entertaining film. It was presented in a not-to-serious style, at times taking the mickey out of more pretentious sword and sorcery films, and with a stunning stereo

soundtrack was very enjoyable indeed.

What has annoyed me though, is the disgraceful way that the film has been handled by the distributors – Cannon, run by Golan and Globus. Since being completed and spending an exclusive one-week run at an independent Cardiff cinema, the film had spent 18 months languishing on the shelves, despite the fact that many films which are much worse artistically have been given general releases. *Sword of the Valiant* still has no prospect of the release it deserves.

Another annoying point, is that Cyrielle Claire – the leading lady, had an English accent in the film. When I met her on the set back in 1982 she had a very noticeable and very catching French accent. It's a pity it was covered up!

Neil Roberts
Caerphilly, South Wales



Melanie Griffith and Craig Wasson double up in De Palma's *Body Double*.

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME



WHO GOES WHERE?

Break out the wreaths. Or, the champers. Depends which side of the Time Lord fence you sit on. But, like it or not, the next BBC-TV series of the venerable *Doctor Who* will be the last.

The next series runs for fourteen weeks – two four parters and three two parters – at the end of which the BEEB will cry “Ex-ter-mi-nate”!

IN COURT—AT LAST!

The *Twilight Zone* triple-tragedy trial finally comes to court in Los Angeles on 20th January... three-and-a-half years since the deaths of Vic Morrow and the Vietnamese youngsters. Pre-trial motions were heard in September when the defence lawyers for John Landis associate producer George Folsey Jr., unit production manager Dan Allingham, SPFX co-ordinator Paul Stewart and the poor chopper pilot, Dorsey Wingo, fought for separate trials. In charge of the hearing is Superior Court Judge Aurelio Muno.

DRAC IS BACK!

Chris Lee is donning the old cloak and choppers again. He's *Dracula* and *Fracchia* is Rome comic Paolo Villaggio in *Dracula* and *Fracchia*, a horror-comic Italian style. It's being shot around the same time as the same Metrofilm company's *Frankenstein* 2000, the inevitable advance on the French *Frankenstein* 1990. Next stop in Lee's world tour (he's already filmed in Africa and Sweden so far) is Poland. He's joining forces with David Carradine again for the US/Polish version of George Bamber's SF tale, *White Dragon*. Then a rest is in order.

KING SIZE OPERATIONS

Truth Will Out Dept. Now it can be told... how Dino De Laurentiis managed to obtain Stephen King's *Trucks* story, set it up as *Maximum Overdrive*... and offer it on a plate to Steve as his directing debut. Simple, really. Having run out of King

properties, Dino cast his eye around, and bought the rights to *Trucks* from Milton Subotsky. Not for the first time... that's where Dino got *Quitters, Inc.* and *The Lodge*, which became part of the lumpy patchwork quilt known as *Cat's Eye*.

King directing King – and the movie may conclude as simply *Overdrive*; Mel Gibson ain't in it, you see – is not the only King project happening. *Spinal Tapper* Rob Reiner has begun *The Body* in Oregon. Even Rome has got into the act, instead of ripping off poor *Cujo* any further. Ovidio Assonitis is preparing *The Running Man*. And Subotsky hasn't sold out all his King acquisitions, either. He's kept two back to become the first film of his resuscitated Amicus label... long time to see.

What with all this, plus *Silver Bullet* in the wings, *Pet Sematary* and *The Stand* to come from Romero, and *The Talisman* from Spielberg, it's hardly surprising that King's New American Library publishers (now issuing his Richard Bachman books) have produced the King 'Year of Fear Calendar' for 1986. No tomb should be without one.

DINO INTO TOP GEAR

Dino De Menta is into something akin to maximum overdrive, himself. Although still headquartered in New York, shooting in his North Carolina or Dinocitta studios in Rome, he's now dispatched a top aide to Hollywood to hunt out more material to get more films rolling. He's so determined to increase production, he's even considering working with Disney.

Having come back, so to speak, with *The Year of the Dragon* – four years after slipping at *Heaven's Gate* – Mike Cimino is due for another Dino trip, *Hand Carved Coffins*, the Truman Capote mystery. John Millius is gung-ho-ing anew with *China Marines*. And as if he's also determined to sweet talk Arnold Schwarzenegger into yet another Conan – Arnie vows: No more! – Dino's booked him for a suspenser, *Triple Identity*. Well, Dino needs Arnie. He's already lost his *Red Sonja*, Brigitte Nielsen, to Sylvester Stallone – she's in *Rocky IV*.



Stallone's new right hand woman, Brigitte Nielsen, star of *Red Sonja*.

SHOLDER TO THE WHEEL

Jack Sholder is the chosen director of *A Nightmare On Elm Street II*. He's the New Yorker who made *Alone in the Dark* (1982) and supplied the script for Jill Clayburgh's next release, *Where Are The Children?*

Before that (rather like Joe Dante) he used to make trailers for his Elm Street landlords, New Line Cinema. He also has an Emmy for his TV work. Jack says the sequel should be ready in time for January's Avoriaz fest in France – where Wes Craven's original picked up two prizes this year.

Wes, meantime, is into Old Fears, from the novel by John Wooley and Ron Wolfe. An old guy returns to his home town... and finds all his childhood fears reactivated. The New Line folk are also hitting back at Gremlins and Ghoulies with... Critters. Can't wait (?)

ARGENTO BROTHERS

Dario Argento's smiling - from cheek to chic - about his Phenomena triumph. Even if it has been stupidly titled Creepers in America. Well, he took a big chance this time, leaving his usual production team - his father, Salvatore and brother Claudio - and made the film on his own for his new Dacfilm combine. He's not quitting there, either. He's since helped script *The Demons*, being made for him by another cinematic son, Mario Bava's Lamberto. It's a horror film taking place in a horror film cinema during a horror film! Dario gets back to directing in mid-Autumn with his next Top Secret scenario.

Claudio, meantime, has formed Intersound - sound's very important to these Argento brothers. He's producing *Little Flames*, a touchy subject about a kid falling so heavily for a 17-year-old beauty he's ready to kill for her. And does. The kid is... six years old. Very touchy, censorially, although director Peter Del Monte has tackled child sexuality before in *Sweet Pea*. "The picture's about the unique period in our lives," says Claudio, "when we have sexual feelings and can't express them physically - yet don't have any shame about them, either. It's a time full of sweet confusion and fantasy which Peter is trying to capture." Ah yes, I remember it well...

ANIMATED ANNECY...

Another month, another film festival. Not Tokyo's first, where David Puttnam's jury took the gloss of the mighty \$1.5 million prize for a new filmmaker by dividing it among three. Not Reykjavik, Sydney, Barcelona or the 3Ms: Melbourne, Munich, Moscow. But the triumphant silver-jubilee animation event at Anecy. Much like Cannes II. Rain. Bitter complaints about the 'senile' jury's big winner, Belgian Nicole Van Goethem's *Greek Tragedy*. Walk-outs of the first Lucasfilm guys' lecture; their next one on computer-animation was much better. And BBC-TV smartly snapping up one of the Special Jury Prize-winners, Ishi Patel's *Paradise*. Oh, yes and one Tokyo entry turned up too late for the contest. Well, it was called *Broken Down Film*.

A crushing 40,000 people enjoyed the treats on show, from the French *Gwen*, and Russian and Chinese cartoons, to a 30-minute movie of children's animation to inspired work by Moebius and (as usual) Belgium's Raoul Servais. Canada and Britain tied, three each, as the main winners of the eight trophies. British winners were Susan Young's *Carnival*, Pat Gavin and Graham Ralph's *Entertainers* trailer, and Alison Snowden's *Second Class Mail* tying for Best First Film with Charade by Canadian Jon Minnis. Ajudged best feature was Jozsef Gemes' *Heroic Times* made at Hungary's Pannonia Studio - already well into it's potential winner in '87 - an SF crime thriller, *City Cat*.

... AND FURTHER AFIELD

And just like Cannes, Anecy seemed packed with organisers of other festivals. Animation is obviously undergoing a new lease of life what with all these new cartoon events due in Los Angeles, a mix of cartoons and puppet films for Antibes and Juan-Les-Pinos, a huge 400-film affair in Hiroshima, planned as a festival of peace on the 40th anniversary of that first A-bomb attack.

HORIZONTAL CONTROL

Keep hearing whispers that Ted Turner, the 24-hour Cable News Network tycoon, is chatting up The Beeb for a sequel to the post-nuclear *Threads*... If he fails, I've two names for him. Roberto Malenotti has New York under nukes galore in *Atomic Syndrome*... And Cream songwriter Peter Brown has scripted a post-apocalypse tale set in 2005 for London's Limehouse brigade. Odd title, though. *The Girl From Woodstock*. That'd make her

16 - If she was among the many born (or conceived) during that wondrous August '69 weekend of... Extending *Red Dawn* (that's a polite way of saying: ripping-off), the ABC network over yonder is shooting *Amerika*, about life in the US when the USSR takes over. Milius is not concerned... CBS starting a 'new' kids' SF series, *Land of the Lost*. Only new if you didn't see the 1974 version... And MGM is shoving *WarGames* into *The Boat* for a four-hour TV show being shot in Rome. All about this nuclear sub in a situation almost triggering off World War III.

STRIP-CASSETTES!

If you had the choice, who would you go for - Spiderman, or Superman? Well, obvious isn't it! We'll see how America votes soon. Because the latest battleground for the heavyweight comic-book firms is on video-cassettes. Spidey, Captain America and The Hulk's old TV exploits are due out on Prism's Marvel Comics Video Library about now. Just 18 titles to start with, up to a full ton over the next two years. DC Comics (who?) are out first with their Filmmation cartoons of Superman, Batman, Aquaman, etc. on Warner Home Video. But - and it's a big but - they went on sale in the summer, when the kids were fuelling the big movie blitz and hardly needed new tapes. Also, DC shows are about £24 a shot. Marvel's go for £20.00, lowest ever price in what's known in the trade as kiddies... and likely, therefore, to bury DC and the top kiddie sellers, Filmmation's He-Man and the Masters of the Universe, The Transformers and G.I. Joe - who's very expensive at £40 a battle. Personally, I prefer the strips...



Prism Entertainment aren't satisfied with just the cartoons. They're currently wheeler-dealing for more live-action Marvel movies. Cannon are doing two, *Captain America* and *Tobe Hooper's* version of *Spiderman*. Prism is looking for other companies keen on *Doctor Doom*, *Doctor Strange* and *Sub-Mariner* - to be shot for the cinema or just cable vision and thereby, cassettes.

COCOON WEEK

David Saperstein, author of Ron Howard's new hit *Cocoon*, has swiftly won a deal for more films with the chiefs of something called MTW. Good for him. Very good, in fact, as he gets to direct the first one with Buckaroo Banzai himself Peter Weller. Title? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Sounds a short shoot - or a good double-biller with the upcoming tenth *Sophia/Lastroianni* teaming. Saturday, Sunday, Monday... So what's wrong with Thursday, Friday... ?

ony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

GODZILLA CONTEST

As mentioned from Cannes, Japan's Toho company has dug up their pet saurian again, 30 years after the first time, ten after the last, for – naturally – *The Return of Godzilla*. Not that good, and didn't do that well in Japan, either. "YOU could help improve things – and win \$12,000, if you can come up with the best storyline for another sequel. Just mail your entry to The Godzilla Committee at – Toho International, 1-81, Yuraku-cho, Choyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.



CONFESSIOAL

After Russell Mulcahy and Steve Barron, it's the turn of the most innovative American video-clipper, Jeff Stein, to get into movies. He's doing it his own way – scripting a little something entitled *True Confessions From Outer Space*. It's a kinda Starman in reverse – the girl's the alien – and set in the Fifties. And, naturally, very visual. What else from the guy behind last year's multi-award winning rock videos of *The Cars*, and the recent one putting Tom Petty into Alice's *Wonderland*. All Jeff needs to get rolling is a mere \$7 million. Any offers...?

DONALD DUCKS – NOTHING!

If he had a fan club, it'd be Pleasence Mania time. Donald's bald dome, beady gaze, mild manners and/or rasping hysteria are just about everywhere I look. He's far better in *Phenomena* than playing another of those legions of ex-Nazis hiding out in South America in the terrible *Treasure of the Amazon*. Even Pleasence needs a director, and while Dario Argento can almost make a movie, Mexico's Rene Cardona, Jr. he of *Survive and Tintorera* infamy, shouldn't even be given a doorman's job at a film studio. A few months back at Cannes, I caught Pleasence on video, opposite Robert Ginty's *Warrior of the Lost World*, which must have made Donald a mite nostalgic. Director David Worth shot it with a certain *THX 1138* feel. Now the bald head is back in Italy for *Nothing Underneath* which Carlo Vanzini is directing (instead of Antonino) in Rome and... Wyoming's Yellowstone Park.

Considering the delayed release, the big surprise was how good Donald Pleasence was as two generations of the old Baron in *Frankenstein's Great-Aunt Tillie* spoof, shot in Mexico in 1983. It's only lately opened there and I've no news of it coming anywhere else. Pity. It's better than I thought, certainly an improvement on the Brazilian kind of horror-funsters. Story takes place "100 years after", with Victor Jr returning to Dad's castle town of Muggelfugger (I didn't say it was all good) to retrieve the baron's fortune. All he unearths is the monster, which he instantly re-activates with some help from his 109-year-young aunt. (She dotes on rejuvenation jelly.) Pleasence and his aunt, Yvonne Furneaux (barely seen on screen since *La Dolce Vita*, 1960) have a fine old time together.

NELSON'S TRAFALGAR?

James Earl Jones, the voice of you - must - know - who, has joined Richard Chamberlain and Sharon Stone now they've finished *King Solomon's Mines* and got straight into the instant sequel, *Quartermain*, in Zimbabwe. J. Lee Thompson directed the first one (quite funny from clips I've seen). Gary Nelson helms the sequel – his first big movie since he fell down a *Black Hole* in 1979.

AT THE GIGER COUNTER

Alien's Swiss Poppa, H.R. Giger, has won a Golden Scroll to go with his Oscar. It comes from the US Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films for the best poster of the year. It's Giger's first movie ad-art and looks much better than the film it's hyping, Ronald W. Moore's *Future Kill* – a bloody reunion of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* stars, Edwin Neil and Marilyn Burns.

The West German film that Giger was once asked to work on – direct, even – has switched from Munich to Rome. Johannes Schaaf got the job in the end – and the story is *Momo*, another novel by *The Neverending Story* teller, Michael Ende.

LIGHTSPEED ECHOES

Latest Imax movie, *The Dream Is Alive*, has footage shot in space by 14 NASA astronauts during three Shuttle missions... Major force behind *Conan*, Ed Pressman, is producer of Sigourney Weaver's hot 'n' humid *Half Moon Street* in London... Then, she stays put (minus Mike Caine, one hopes) for *Alien II*... *The Boat's* skipper, Jurgen Prochnow, is up against *Killing Cars* in Michael Verhoeven's Munich movie. It also stars Agnes Soral, William (Cannon) Conrad and the director's *frau*, Senta Berger... George Gipe has been busy, novelising Joe Dante's *Explorers* and Bob Zemeckis' *Back To The Future*... David Saperstein handles *Cocoon*. But then, he always did. It's just that his novel hadn't been published before the film; Dick Zanuck's co-producer wife, Lili Fini, wanted the story kept under wraps. Wise move... *Kieron – The First Voyager* is an SF TV special from down under. *Planet of the Christmas Trees* is an Italian movie... James Glickenhaus is directing *Death Freak* and producing teen caper, *Totally Gross*. Titles suit him... Anne Rice's novel, *Interview With The Vampire*, one optioned by Travolta during a Friday night fever, winds up as an NBC tele-film... Latest Disney pacts, for three films apiece: Bette Midler (!), the ZAZ company of the *Airplane* trip, the Zucker brothers and Jim Abrahams, and *Beverly Hills Cop* writer, Dan Petrie Jr. Dan's trio include *Extradition* and *Pool Boy* – not to be confused with his Dad's *Bay Boy*. ♦



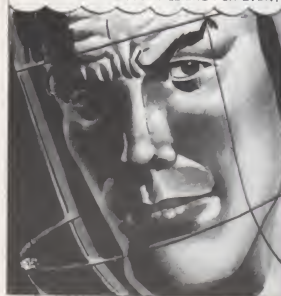
Michael J. Fox (right) goes *Back to the Future* and encounters his youthful parents (Lee Thompson and Crispin Glover).

THE MAN WHO DREW TOMORROW

HOW FRANK HAMPSON CREATED DAN DARE,
THE WORLD'S BEST COMIC STRIP

By Alastair Crompton

IN A FEW MOMENTS FROM NOW, THE
REIGN OF THE ROBOTS WILL END FOR EVER!



This is the first complete account of how FRANK HAMPSON, possibly the most dedicated strip cartoon story-teller the world has ever seen, devised, wrote and drew DAN DARE, Pilot of the Future, Britain's legendary space hero, for the famous 1950's EAGLE comic. Nothing like it has been seen since and in 1975 Hampson was voted by an International Jury of his peers the Best Post-War Writer and Artist of strip cartoons.

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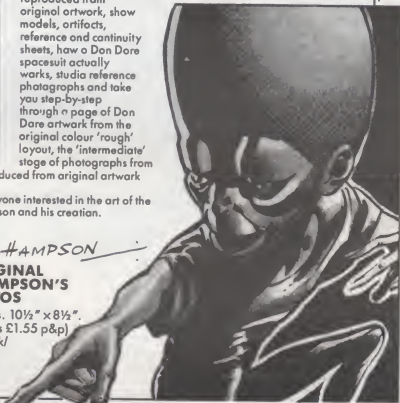
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Legend

Although principal photography for the \$24.5 million production of *Legend* started at Pinewood Studios on March 26, 1984, for director Ridley Scott, one of the cinema's premier visual stylists, it was the culmination of almost four years of preparation. Between the completion of *Alien* and the start of *Blade Runner*, Scott concreted plans to bring a fairy tale concerning the eternal struggle between the powers of light and darkness to the screen. It was an idea he had toyed with while filming *The Duellists* in France seven years ago, but at that point couldn't really make a clear cut decision about which route he wanted his directing career to take. He elaborates, "One of the reasons why I wanted to make *Legend* was because of my aborted project, *Tristan and Isolde*. After *The Duellists* I couldn't see the point of spending another year of my life on what would essentially be another art movie that only a limited audience would see. Although the screenplay had been written for *Tristan* I felt I was pursuing the same exhausting and frustrating terms but artistic ones. So I dropped the idea to do *Alien* instead. I was right to do that in retrospect. Then I prepared *Dune* for a year but all I saw with that project was another two and a half years stretching in front of me before

I even got behind the cameras. Filmmaking is actually going out and doing it and not spending three years in pre-production. But I always wanted to return to the mythological or fairy tale idea, as I'm one of those people who find the real world of no particular interest".

To get some kind of connection and lead as to what *Legend* should be about, Scott voraciously read all the established classic fairytales, such as the Grimm Brothers, and he soon realised that the film would have to be an original screenplay. "I wanted to avoid anything to do with castles and villagers", he says, "I banned anything I considered too twee. Therefore it was far easier to design a story to fit around the medium of cinema than bend the medium for an established story". It was at this time that Scott chanced upon the books written by Montana-based American author William Hjortsberg. Scott continues, "I discovered he had already written screenplays for some unmade lower budgeted films, and we both seemed to share the same vision. I wanted something with a broad appeal. I didn't want to do anything overtly inaccessible which might have happened with a European writer. I felt that Gatz (Hjortsberg's nickname) being American was an advantage, and one that meant more universal appeal. On our first meeting I ran Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* and I based our



This picture: The mystical white unicorn. Bottom left: Lili (Miss Sara), the epitome of innocence. Right: Ridley Scott.

working relationship on the fact that we were both wildly enthusiastic about it".

In January 1981, just prior to the principal shooting of *Blade Runner*, Scott and Hjortsberg spent five weeks thrashing out a rough storyline which originally bore the title *Legend of Darkness*. "Fifteen revisions later, we finally worked out what we both wanted", says Scott. "To begin with I only had the vague notion of something in pursuit of the swiftest steed alive which, of course, was the unicorn. One aspect I was very definite about was that I wanted the outside world shown as economically as possible. To that end we settled on the solitary clockmaker's cottage. Originally the quests were more prolonged and involved the classic earning process, but all these had to be substantially reduced. If the budget for *Legend* had been only \$2 million then I would have had less regard for the audience in this matter. But it all boiled down to the fact that it was hopefully the right idea at the right time. What I was nervous about was getting too complex in film terms. Every quest story tends to have side quests that depart from the main thrust of the story in order to get a weapon or a super power. I wanted to give *Legend* a more contemporary movement to it rather than get bogged down in a too classical retelling. With a budget of the scale we had, we had to look to a broader audience who just won't tolerate that. Personally I love that approach, but apart from critics, most people don't".

The two Hollywood majors who have been involved with *Legend* right from the start are Universal, who are distributing the film in the US and Canada, and 20th Century Fox, who have the rights for the rest of the world. But it could have been Disney's according to Scott who admits to being influenced by that studio's animation for the final look of *Legend*. "When we were trying to sell the project", says Scott, "it was very dark, as I do tend to lean in that direction anyway. The fear of distributors at that time was extraordinary. When we submitted it to Disney I tried to reassure them that my intention was not to go too far into that area but they couldn't seem to understand my whole change of pace based on my previous work. Luckily I have my advertising work to fall back on which means I didn't get desperately panic-stricken while trying to set up *Legend*".

Prior to Scott securing the services of production designer Assheton Gorton, artist Alan Leigh worked on *Legend* as the initial visual consultant. "He drew some characters and sketched environments", says Scott, "But then I managed to get Gorton who I wanted for both *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. Because I'd spent seven years at art school I was able to have some pretty dynamic conversations with Gorton. We would literally sketch at each other as he is so sophisticated in this area, because he knows all the pitfalls of total interior exteriors. We both knew that whatever we did would never look absolutely real, but would very quickly gain its own reality and dispense with the feeling of any ▶





► theatricality. One of the big fears of *Legend* being a totally studio film was striving for a believable reality as I didn't want anyone to think they were watching anything phony. I needed a successful suspension of belief ". And that is why Scott employed every conceivable device known to him from his commercial career in order to make *Legend's* atmosphere come alive. He continues, "It was all quite simple really. No great revelations here I'm afraid. The flurries of dandelion seeds were in fact loads of duck down being flung into lots of wind fans. When a huge blob went past the camera looking obviously like feathers, I yelled cut. It's a method I've used for years. Everyone always says my films look like advertisements, but I rest my case by saying that *Blade Runner* is now in the Library of Congress along with *E.T.* and *Citizen Kane*".

Arthur Rackham and Heath Robinson's work were also influential in the final look of *Legend* says Scott. "But it was primarily Disney animation that influenced me more" he admits. "I could have taken this same script and gone two ways. One would have been dark and Celtic which would have limited it. The other

was the Disney route and as I made *Legend* primarily for children, my children to be precise, that's the avenue I pursued. Having visual references to *Snow White*, *Fantasia* and especially *Pinocchio* were clear cut decisions by me. This visual interest was necessary to carry the basic simplistic story".

Pre-production on *Legend* included special-effects supervisor Richard Edlund whose involvement came about because Scott didn't want to be limited to the number of little people who could actually act for the major character roles. Scott expands, "At one stage I wanted Mickey Rooney to play one of the characters, but at 5' 2" next to 5' 8" Tom Cruise he didn't look that tiny. Edlund came up with a method of shooting everything on 70mm and taking that negative and shrinking the actors to any size to make the illusion more realistic. The budget for this alone was enormous and affected everything so I had to axe it and take the gamble on finding an ensemble of good, small actors".

Scott had no pre-conditioned ideas of who he actually wanted to star in *Legend*, but in his own words, he wanted people he hadn't seen before. He continues, "I had just seen *The Tin Drum* and found myself wondering if the star, David Bennent, had grown. Well he had,



Left top: Jack (Tom Cruise) and Lili (Mia Sara). Bottom: Gump (David Bennett). This page bottom: Darkness' minions Blix (Alice Playten) and Pox (Peter O'Farrell). This picture: 'Swamp thing' Meg (Robert Picardo).



but not that much! For Princess Lili and Jack O' the Green, I wanted two characters who had to personify innocence. Most people assume Lili is the innocent but in my mind it's Jack. When she sings to the unicorns, heralding their destruction, she asks if she can sing to Jack which means that she hasn't learnt her lesson at all and is only too happy to manipulate him as well. That is the first mistake Darkness makes about Lili, as she is only too well aware about her sexuality and how she can use it. What's so great about Tim Curry as Darkness is, although I could see him internally panicking, that there was nothing left of him, visually speaking, under Rob Bottin's make-up; his personality is stamped on the role in the deffest way. I wanted exactly that controlled sense of theatricality. If he had gone over the top at all it would have been laughable".

All the principal players apart from Cruise and newcomer Mia Sara spent hours in the make-up room every morning under the watchful eye of Bottin and his team of experts led by Peter Robb-King. Each person needed three make-up artists working on them, and this expense led to Bottin's original menagerie of characters being honed down to the minimum. Scott saw the make-up area as a major problem for the actors, as he explains. "They were all very tired before they even got to the sound-stage, but once they all saw how good they looked, it pumped their adrenalin and they ended to forget the whole boring process - until the next day of course! The average actor was in make-up for three and a half hours. Tim Curry started out at eight hours and got it down to five and a half hours. Enclosing Curry's body totally in make-up meant that he had to be more than patient in getting it off. He had to sit in a bath for an hour to liquefy the soluble spirit gum. Unfortunately he got impatient and claustrophobic and too hurriedly pulled it off, which meant he tore his skin off as well. We had to shoot round him for a week to calm the reaction down".

According to Scott, the larger the production got, the less money he seemed to have, a feeling not helped by the fact that 16 weeks into production and ten days left on the large 007 stage at Pinewood, the entire set burnt down. "I had started the snow scenes", recalls Scott, "but still needed to get more shots. During the lunch break the fire

broke out and all I could say was 'Shit!' I hurried back to my office and set about rejuvenging the schedule to get quickly onto another stage. I only lost three days in total by simply escalating the building on one of the other stages and getting on with some editing in the interim.

Retaining the order of the universe in relation to the film process meant I wasn't too knocked off balance. Control is the key word in my vocabulary. The role of a good producer is to protect me from most of the outside pressures in order to keep my resources channelled into the





This picture: Lili is transformed in Darkness' castle. Below: David Bennent (Gump) with his friends Brown Tom (Cork Hubbert) and Screwball (Billy Barty).

film. And if it hadn't been for Arnon Milchan, I doubt whether I would have made *Legend*. He is so good at deals and one of the few men who could have organised this project so well. He was totally supportive throughout and I feel his European attitude to film was a blessing, counterbalancing Hjortsberg input".

Scott doubts whether *Legend* would have been a better film if it had been scaled down and had a smaller budget. "If that had been the case", he explains, "I would have had to have shot in an actual forest and we couldn't have had any elaboration on the settings or characters. Actually I was a bit envious of this year's *The Company of Wolves* as they did so much on a minuscule budget. But while that was an enormous success in England it closed in America after a week. American audiences couldn't seem to grasp the denseness of the plot or the sequential build-up of the story which is one reason why I have eliminated a lot of subtext and detailing from my original cut of *Legend*".

Scott's first cut of *Legend* was 125 minutes long, which he found satisfactory but felt it dwelt unnecessarily on minor plot points. The next cut was 113 minutes long which, when test marketed in Orange County, was considered perfect. Perfect that is for the minority audience who don't mind working at being entertained. So another two reels were removed totally 20 minutes. In Britain, *Legend* runs 95 minutes long but before the film debuts in America it is going to lose even more footage as Scott explains. "European audiences are more sophisticated. They accept preambles and subtleties, whereas the US

goes for a much broader stroke. Americans are so governed by the media which I consider totally unhealthy. On MTV the younger generation, especially, watches sub-par montages all day long which makes them impatient, and nowadays 16 to 22 year-olds seem to have missed the educational process that makes them aware of classical references enough to be attracted by them. It's a sad fact of life but you are obliged to take note of that. You would be a fool not to. So the American cut of *Legend* is much simpler. The clockmaker's cottage sequence is being removed so the film will open on Jack and Lili meeting in the glade. Therefore the comparison in really obvious terms of what Darkness' rule has meant before and after Lili enters the cottage will be lost. Also Darkness' entrance may be moved up to stop the audience getting restless. Structurally I prefer holding him back as in the European print. Also on my insistence, part of the campaign for *Legend* will point out that it isn't my usual sort of film".

Despite rumours that Ridley Scott's next film would be a Duran Duran vehicle, he hasn't really decided what to do, although a musical would seem on the cards. One thing is for certain, he has nothing whatsoever to do with 20th Century Fox's upcoming sequel to *Alien* titled *Aliens*. He continues, "I was slightly hurt that I wasn't even asked to be involved with it, even at a reduced fee. I'm sure the thinking behind the project is that they can rework the idea at a lower budget. I'm slightly surprised that none of the original personell from this country are involved, but I'm sure director James Cameron will do a good job. *The Terminator* was an interesting item and it had a similar relentless quality to it in common with *Alien* to my way of thinking". ♦



FILM REVIEWS

MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME

"Quantum progress from the previous *Maxes*"

According to the scriptures of Kennedy-Miller-Hayes, in the post-apocalyptic future, in the not-too-lucky country of Australia, not only will petrol be as precious as draught Fosters, but pig shit will be used to power small outback towns. That may give you an idea of the more playful and speculative spirit behind *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*.

The film kicks off, literally, a number of years after the events of *Mad Max II*, in the sandy wastelands of Australia. To regain his possessions from the bizarre urban-cum-carnival oasis of Bartertown - where trade has become the lifestyle of its past-punk denizens - Max Rockatansky (Mel Gibson) has to strike an uneasy alliance with the town's mistress, Aunty Entity (Tina Turner). For his part, Max narrowly defeats the golem-like Gladiator known as the Blaster in the Thunderdome, a diabolically designed two-man arena. Aunty Entity, however, having used Max to help her eliminate a potential threat to her rule, reneges on her part of the bargain and forces Max to spin the Wheel of Fortune, thereby determining his fate - exile into the desert. Here he is miraculously found and nursed to health by a tribe of wild children, some of whom insist that Max takes them back to civilisation. Max refuses and tries, unsuccessfully, to prevent them embarking on the foolhardy journey themselves. He ironically has to re-enter Bartertown and escape with the children, hotly pursued by Aunty Entity and her motorised marauders...

Fans of the rivetting roller coaster action and burlesque brutality of *Maxes I and II* are likely to be disappointed by the latest film's more measured, thoughtful approach. The high octave thrills of the former films have been tempered by broader humour, a more elaborately designed look and, most significantly, a more expansive, involving storyline.

The sly jokes come a little thicker and quicker (and flatter) than before, playing even more on the ironic use of society's pre-catastrophe idioms and artefacts. The production design is stunning - especially the creation of the grimy, chaotic circus of Bartertown, and the quite surreal, albeit uncon-



Above: Max (Mel Gibson) confronts the Collector (Frank Thring) Beyond Thunderdome.

vinde, sweep over the spectre city of Sydney.

Yet the most curious development is the more ambitious plot, which permits quite a slackening of tension, unheard of in Max's earlier wanderings. The opening Bartertown segment is constructed as a particularly distinct establishing tale, at the end of which Max is dispatched to his presumed death, only for the scouting strands of the second tale to find him. During the 'middle' segment, the film drags conspicuously, as the tribal children relate, not without invention, their origin; Max destroys their image of him as their pre-ordained saviour (although his presence still comes across in much the same murky mythical, not to say mystical, way as Clint Eastwood's preacher in *Pale Rider*); and events are rather transparently concocted for their journey back to Bartertown and the fast and furious finale.

Mel Gibson is also allowed to breathe more life and sympathy into the character of Max, who has recovered somewhat from his heart-hardened

past. Tina Turner doesn't so much bring Aunty Entity to (larger than) life, as Aunty Entity builds on the charismatic theatricality of Tina Turner. Also worth mentioning is the neatly timed comic relief provided by Bruce Spence's manic, eye-bulging Jedediah, and by the pint-size powerhouse of Ironbar (Angry Anderson).

If *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* doesn't live up to the pace and power of its predecessors, its richer visual style and more substantial storyline and characterisations, are a welcome, if not wholly successful, change in emphasis. And judging from the quantum progress made from the previous *Maxes*, I for one can't wait for *Mad Max IV*.

James Olsen

Starring: Mel Gibson (Max), Tina Turner (Aunty Entity), Bruce Spence (Jedediah), Angry Anderson (Ironbar), Helen Buday (Savannah). Directed by George Miller and George Ogilvie, produced by George Miller, written by Terry Hayes and George Miller.

THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO

"Allen's preoccupation with cinema reaches its logical and marvellous zenith in this romantic fantasy"

Until now, I've never been entirely convinced by Woody Allen's films. Self-indulgence (Annie Hall, Manhattan), and fey 'deverness' (Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy, Zelig) have hovered ominously on the sidelines of his comic genius. Although signs of a turn for the better appeared in his last film, the hilarious Broadway Danny Rose.

His latest movie, *The Purple Rose of Cairo* completely confirms this maturity as a director and a writer. It's just under one and a half hours of sheer enjoyment.

Allen intelligently chooses to remain firmly behind the cameras, thus giving his infatuation with the heyday of Hollywood a chance to really blossom in the highly capable hands of Mia Farrow and Jeff Daniels as the leads. Allen's preoccupation with cinema reaches its logical and marvellous zenith in this romantic fantasy; the tale of an oppressed American housewife Cecilia (Mia Farrow) who escapes the drab poverty of Depression America through visits to her local picture house, seeing one film (*The Purple Rose of Cairo*) so often, that the hero steps off the screen to declare his love.

This idea is both totally original (and beautifully executed) — a black and white Jeff Daniels turning into colour with the sort of editing expertise shown in *Zelig*, and totally familiar. We all have daydreams about meeting our screen heroes/heroines in person. This central dynamic makes the film so enthralling.

Allen explores the likely consequences of such an event with great insight and humour. What for instance would the rest of the cast do without one of its leading men? In comic performances, Deborah Rush, John Wood and Edward Herrmann argue with the audience, and bang their noses on the screen in attempt to climb out after their fellow character.

The comedy is never raucous, but is gentle and perceptive, with fewer of the overused Jewish-New Yorker-one liners. Although one cracker slips in when Cecilia declares her love for the celluloid hero — adding "So he's not real. You can't have everything."

Humorous complications arise when the real life alter ego of the celluloid hero arrives to restore his creation to film. Jeff Daniels turns in a great performance as both men, with the convincing wide-eyed look of a thirties film lead. Cecilia faces the dilemma of choosing between a perfect one-dimensional man without any mental experience or equipment to cope with the real world or an egotistical, smoothie flesh and blood actor. Both promise release from her drab life, but can either really provide it?

Judging by the final sad twist, Allen feels ultimately

reality cannot echo celluloid. Movie escapism returns to its place on the screen. But what a place it is... In the final moments of the film a tearful Mia Farrow becomes enthralled in the wonderful Fred and Ginger musical *Top Hat*.

This succinct (just the right length) film is completely delightful, a marvellous homage to the spirit of the cinematic Thirties. It effectively destroys the idea of cineaste directors contemplating their own navels. Eat your heart out Godard!

Penny Holme

Starring: Mia Farrow (Cecilia), Jeff Daniels (Tom Baxter/Gil Shepherd), Danny Aiello (Monk) Ed Herrmann (Henry), John Wood (Jason), Deborah Rush (Rita). Written and directed by Woody Allen, produced by Robert Greenhut, executive producer: Charles H. Joffe.



RAMBO — FIRST BLOOD PART II

"Dumb, tiresome gung-heroics, with Stallone at his flag-waving funniest."

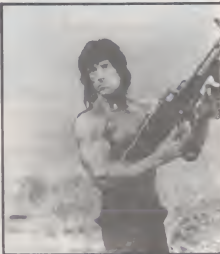
He's been betrayed, brutalised, blown up and he's back for more. He's John Rambo, alias Sylvester Stallone, the super-ex-trooper and he's out for his *First Blood Part II*.

Portrayed (read laboured) as an "expendable" political pawn for a government too cheap to part with the reparations for their 'boys still in 'Nam', the story provides Rambo with the patently specious excuse to engage in acts of extreme prejudice and violence. His psychotic patriotism and virtual invulnerability propel his exploits into comic book territory, as does the snide stereotyping of his Vietcong and Commie enemies. But the film's heartfelt paean to Vietnam veterans dismisses any claim of self-conscious parody.

Even the vertiginous helicopter sequences and some lush location photography can't rescue the repetitive bomb-shoot-'em-up action and the predictable set-ups for more righteous vengeance. The only relief comes inadvertently from Stallone's

dire delivery of his hapless script, and in watching him grunt and bulge his way out of situations that would have flattened a better man's Indiana Jones.

Scripting gems include Rambo's po-faced pronouncement early in the film, when presented with the array of sophisticated technology at his disposal: "I always believed a man's greatest weapon was his mind". Amen! And the three-minute 'that's what America means to me' epilogue when Rambo's former Green Beret boss (Richard Crenna) asks him not to cut himself off from society. "What do you want John?" Rambo (face contorted with angst) replies "I want, uh... (looks to the ground, heavily), I want, uh... (looks at the camera; the audience already completing his lines), I want our country to love us as much as we love it..." And then strides off, bow-legged



Mia Farrow in *The Purple Rose*. Stallone and friend learn their lines in *Rambo*.

and still armed, into another red dawn. It's almost worth wading through the whole hyperbolic mess for Sly's sing-along message.

That the film's heart is in the right place is debatable at best; at worst, it comes off as an entirely dubious re-writing of the Vietnam War, which appears to have successfully tapped the current American mood. I mean, it's not everyday that a film gets a presidential sanction. At an hour and thirty-six minutes, *Rambo — First Blood Part II* presents staggeringly dumb and tiresome gung-heroics, with Sylvester Stallone at his flag-waving funniest. Stallone has been quoted as seeing the film as educational, but hell, it's only entertainment, right?

James Olsen

Starring: Sylvester Stallone (John Rambo), Richard Crenna (Colonel Trautman), Julie Hickson (Co Bao), Charles Napier (Marshall Murdoch), Steven Berkoff (Lt Podorsky). Directed by George P. Cosmatos. Produced by Buzz Feitshans, Screenplay by Sylvester Stallone and James Cameron.

RED SONJA

"bland, junk movie"

Conan's back and Red Sonja's got him! Only this time round he's called Kalidor for contractual reasons. Well that's the only point of interest worth mentioning dispensed with in this latest Dino De Laurentiis blockhead package of

Hyborian thrills – what else is there?

I suppose if you were to ask me what the story of *Red Sonja* was about, I'd say about as much as I could take. Brigitte Nielsen, Scandinavia's worst export since Julie Ege, battles evil queens, obnoxious child monarchs, rubbery subterranean sea serpents and accents with Arnold Schwarzenegger, on the pathetic quest to find a glowing green talisman that, if not destroyed, could signal the end of the world.

Admittedly there's plenty of sword in *Red Sonja*, but precious little sorcery. The efficient direction by Richard Fleischer and the inventive production and costume design by Danilo Donati fight the only losing battle contained in this bland junk movie. The bare outline that passes as the plot and the wretched acting simply finish it off. Lines of



Teeth gritting stuff – Brigitte Nielsen bares her molars as Red Sonja.

dialogue like "I have fought 177 men and the only one to survive has no legs" don't help much either.

Red Sonja isn't camp enough to be funny, just boring. Showing signs of heavy editing, it is only 88 minutes in length – a blessed relief.

Ms Nielsen would be wise to stick with boyfriend Sylvester Stallone. Hopefully that will ensure she never has to act again.

Alan Jones

Starring: Brigitte Nielsen (*Red Sonja*), Arnold Schwarzenegger (*Kalidor*), Sandahl Bergman (*Queen Gefren*), Paul Smith (*Falkon*), Ronald Lacey (*Itol*). Directed by Richard Fleischer, produced by Christian Ferry, screenplay by Clive Exton and George MacDonald Fraser.

THE BRIDE

"A rather pedestrian affair, with no surprises"

The *Bride* is one of those movies where you have to read the production notes in order to find out why it was made. The reason certainly isn't evident in the film itself which appears, on the surface, to be yet another version of *Frankenstein*. Do we need another version of *Frankenstein*? is a question you may well ask, as I did. After all, apart from the early Karloff ones, there were all the Hammer versions, plus the TV movie *Franken-*

stein: The True Story and the various parodies such as *Young Frankenstein* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, so is there anything new that can possibly be done with this classic story?

Well, maybe there is, but the makers of *The Bride* haven't done it. After a spectacular opening sequence showing the good doctor's latest creation being brought to life the film turns into a rather pedestrian affair, with no surprises at all. The narrative itself splits into two with the male monster (Clancy Brown) going off to join a circus in the company of a midget (David Rappaport), while the female monster (Jennifer Beals), who is unaware she is a scissors-and-paste job (unlike the male creature she is devoid of scar tissue), stays home at the castle while Frankenstein tries to mold her into the 'perfect woman'.

Things don't go well at the circus. After the evil circus owner (played with his usual subtlety by Alexei Sayle) and his more evil sidekick (Phil Daniels) bring about the death of the Rappaport character, the monster is obliged to travel on sans midget and eventually ends up back at the old homestead. He arrives just in time to prevent Frankenstein (Sting) doing beastly things to his female creation. After killing Frankenstein he and the girl run away to Venice together and are last seen swanning about in a gondola...

This is when I resorted to the production notes where I learned that, according to the director Franc Roddam, *The Bride* is "... very modern, even though it is period, because it takes a contemporary position on women. It says that women are entitled to do as they please."

And there I was thinking I'd been watching, for the nth time, a movie about this mad doctor who defies God and Nature by bringing corpses back to life, when all along I was watching an allegory about women's rights. Yes folks, the real message of *The Bride* is that every woman has the right to run off to Venice with the monster of her choice, even if she is basically nothing but a walking collection of bits and pieces taken from dead bodies...

Coming next, no doubt, a feminist version of *Dracula* in which his vampire brides form a feminist co-operative and have him expelled from Transylvania on the grounds that he advocates violence against women, alive and undead alike.

John Brosnan

Starring: Sting, Jennifer Beals, Geraldine Page, Clancy Brown, David Rappaport, Quentin Crisp, Alexei Sayle, Phil Daniels. Directed by Franc Roddam, written by Lloyd Fonvielle, produced by Victor Drai.

WEIRD SCIENCE

"Plumbs the depths"

Here's proof positive that it isn't just Britain that makes cringe-worthy parodies along the lines of *Morons from Outer Space* and *Blood-bath at the House of Death*. *Weird Science* describes itself as "a special effects comedy". Funny that (about the only thing that is, I might add) it comes across more as a feeble blend of tediously vulgar, stale half-baked ideas.

Requiring an enormous amount of dedication to sit through, the premise of *Weird Science* was one

better left on paper. Anthony Michael Hall and Ian Mitchell-Smith play two high school nerds who decide to create the answer to their male fantasies, while watching a computer colour-enhanced re-run of the original *Frankenstein* on television.

Before you can say "It's Alive!", the two sex-hungry teens wire a Barbie doll to their Apple and feed in *Playboy* centerfolds and other Amazonian data. An electrical storm provides the extra power they need to herald a glamour girl Kelly LeBrook's appearance. How Hell's Angel mutants, a nuclear bomb, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*-type effects and other ill-assorted genre ephemera fit into this sorry mess is better left unsaid. Though director John Hughes plumbs the depths with one particular effect. Are you ready for Smith's Fascist elder brother's transformation into a flatulent mobile



Kelly LeBrook – Barbie doll made flesh – in *Weird Science*.

pile of humanoid dung? No – neither was I! On the strength of this lamentable film, Hughes' *The Breakfast Club* looks like a fluke.

Pity the poor actors. They all look uncomfortably stranded in the debris of misfiring jokes, although there is a certain masochistic delight in watching ex-model LeBrook trying to act and failing miserably.

The smutty, elephantine subtlety of *Weird Science* is enough reason to give this film the elbow. Should you need another, try smirking at the predictable targets and laboured jokes Hughes serves up, with no opportunity missed to drag the pathetic proceedings into the gutter.

Still, there is no accounting for taste. If you liked *Surf II* or *Porky's Revenge*, this may well be your type of entertainment.

Alan Jones

Starring: Anthony Michael Hall (Gary), Kelly LeBrook (Lisa), Ian Mitchell-Smith (Wyatt), Bill Paxton (Chet), Suzanne Synder (Deb), Judie Aronson (Hilly). Produced by Joel Silver. Directed by and Written by John Hughes. Director of Photography: Matthew F. Leonetti.

SCRIPT DRAWING

The craft of storyboarding is, regrettably, poorly documented, despite its importance in filmmaking. In this interview, Martin Asbury, probably better known as the artist on the 'Garth' newspaper comic strip, talks to James Olsen, about keeping the continuity on Ridley Scott's Legend, and other projects.



Storyboards have become an indispensable tool in filmmaking (feature or otherwise). While a few filmmakers favour a more open, less linear approach, such as Nicolas Roeg, most work from a script that has been visualised as concretely as possible before the first cameras are rolled into position.

Directors like Alfred Hitchcock, whose career began as a storyboard artist, Steven Spielberg, George Miller and Ridley Scott, use the storyboard extensively to plan the action of the entire shooting script, discarded sequences and all. As the storyboards provide a constant guide for the director and cinematographer, the director or writer should, ideally, sketch out the script themselves. This is usually unpracticable, so the time-consuming task is handed to a storyboard or production artist.



"(The storyboard is) a visual script; allowing the filmmakers to see how the shots are composed; how shots are edited from one shot to the next; and how the film flows."

The storyboard artist on Ridley Scott's *Legend* is Martin Asbury, who sees his role as plotting out a "visual script; allowing the filmmakers to see how shots are composed; how shots are edited from one shot to the next; and how the film flows."

Martin Asbury came to *Legend* after only working on one previous film, *Greystoke*, which was something of a chance affair as he explains. "I used to do storyboards for TV commercials while working on 'Garth', to supplement my income. Man cannot live by Garth alone! During that time I was approached by the production designer on *Greystoke*, and I went with him to Hugh Hudson, and we clicked, and that was it. Previous to that I had done a sequence for *Dune* when Ridley Scott was going to direct it, and was offered *Blade Runner*, but the money wasn't there. So when *Greystoke* came to an end, fortuitously Ridley contacted me to storyboard his next film, *Legend*."

As *Greystoke* was Asbury's first film, his approach to the script was considerably different to that for *Legend*. "Maybe it was because I hadn't worked with a director before," he acknowledges. "Hugh Hudson was very laid back about the whole business. He'd hand me the script piecemeal, and I would take it away to work on a sequence and show it to him. He generally wouldn't ask me to alter anything."

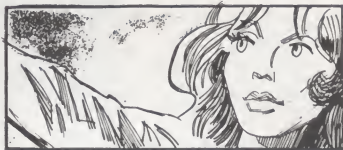
"As I hadn't storyboarded before, I specified that I should work at home, where I could work much quicker. But, through inexperience, I ended up doing huge boards for *Greystoke*, and in colour! With Ridley on *Legend* it was much faster material, and he wanted me to be there at his elbow. It was stimulating working that closely, even though Ridley would change his mind all the time."

The similarities between comic strips and storyboards seem self-evident, and comic books are often cited as being good examples of storyboarding, as they also breakdown the script into key sequences or panels. However, Asbury sees the disciplines involved in both as quite different. "Well for a start, storyboards are obviously not as well finished as comic strips because you need to develop a shorthand for the characters, only indicating the differences between them. And sometimes on a film you're virtually boarding second for second on the screen. Also, in a daily strip, you have to compose it in such a way that the eye goes along and doesn't fall off the end of the page, so you have people facing inwards in the final panel. In films you can't do that, because if you cross the eyeline the audience would be confused. It would lack continuity if you suddenly changed the position of the people on the screen."

"Storyboards have to be drawn much faster, and it can take me up to three days sometimes to do a complicated set of panels for 'Garth' When I was doing commercial storyboards I had to do thirty frames overnight, and in full colour. On *Legend* I tried to do 40 or 50 frames a day (black and white), occasionally working in a flourish on a

As the director ultimately chooses the shape and look of the film, he/she generally liaises quite closely with the storyboard artist at all stages, but, as Asbury points out, this is not always the case. "It depends on the director," he continues. "It's different every time. On *Legend* there were a lot of huddles with the director, the producer and the screenwriter during pre-production and filming, which is

Facing page: Martin Asbury. Facing page and below: The storyboards indicating Lili's first encounter with the unicorns.



"On Legend I tried to do 40 or 50 frames a day, occasionally working in a flourish on a scene I liked. But generally you just don't have the time as you're drawing flat out."

scene I liked. But generally you just don't have the time, as you're drawing flat out.

"I end up doing thousands of drawings and I've got a whole file of rejects. For instance hundreds of drawings were eventually discarded on *Legend*, which happens on all films. We had many alternative openings and endings, such as the beginning in Darkness' underground fortress, which was only added right at the end, and at one stage the goblins were meant to be riding ostriches. There's also the 'Aberaxas sequence' where Jack has to battle a giant with two heads - Aberaxas - to get his armour and swords, which was quite a funny scene, and that had to be dropped. But it doesn't worry me, you can't remain precious about your work at the pace you have to work."



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by Alan McKenzie

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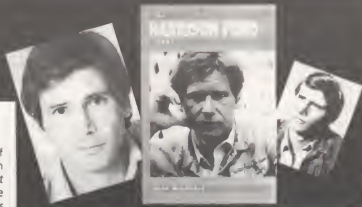
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T203

▶ when you can put your ideas forward. I enjoyed a great deal of creative input in *Legend*, which was lovely. We also had terrific struggles on the film, as I'd often fight for a sequence if I was very keen on it. Everything is very fluid in films, and everyone has an input. And it's the reverse in comics, where I have far less creative say. I get the scripts which I have to illustrate, and in theory I should just go ahead and draw the pictures and do what I'm told. However in 'Garth', because I haven't been especially happy with the stories, I do give myself some rein."

Working on his current film, Jim Henson's *Labyrinth*, Asbury also found that his visual skills were required to overcome technical challenges posed by particular sequences. "There's this complicated sequence at the end of *Labyrinth* called the 'Escher sequence', he elaborates, "which is based on one of Escher's paintings where the stairs are upside down, sideways, etc. Well, David Bowie (the somewhat inept king of the goblins), who's the star of the film, sings a song in this structure, moving around in different gravities. So I had to tie in the storyboards with the song, and I knew I had to finish a

Above: Comic strip dynamics in 'Garth'. Below: Asbury's 'major sequence' storyboards, which provide a quick summary of the action.



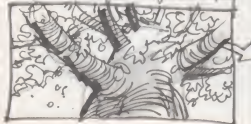
Lili
'feels'
something
there



'Something'
moves
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We are
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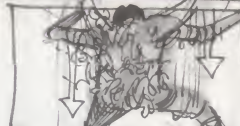
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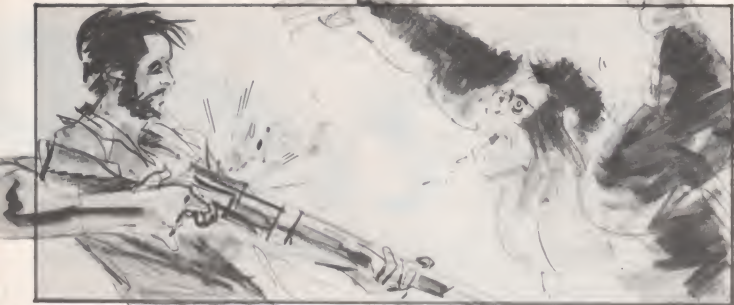
a
figure
drops
silently
into front
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camera



she
spins
back
startled
then:...



"Jack!"



► certain movement by the time he finished a line. You could read the board and time everything, which was fun. But unless the director asks you to time a sequence you don't have to, you just have to explain it.

"*Labyrinth* is quite complex, in that it's puppets mixed with live action. The sets have to be built to accommodate the puppeteers. In fact, with *Labyrinth* I had to put camera instructions on all the frames. Whether it's second unit or first, what lens had to be used, etc."

At the early production meetings on *Labyrinth*, Asbury's storyboards provided the focus and springboard for people's ideas. "Without sounding big headed, they couldn't move until I arrived with the storyboards," Asbury insists. "Then they could talk their way through what had to be done. And it's not just at the obvious level of camera angles – long shots, close-ups, inserts (a shot photographed separately and inserted later) – or the pacing and storytelling, but a storyboard artist can show people what is necessary and what is not. When it is a location or on a set. When special effects are going to be used. How many set ups are to be done in a day. How many actors are needed. What's going to have opticals added to it later.

"On *Greystoke* there was a huge sequence – the shipwreck – which was dropped. And this is where the storyboard artist really comes into his own, because without me doing that early work, they wouldn't have realised it was going to cost something like £500,000 to do, and that it was going to take too long to set up and wasn't going to add to the story.

"I also often end up doing alternative sequences after talking to the props or special effects people at these early planning sessions, to gauge the difficulty of setting up a scene. If it looks difficult then I'll board out a substitute which the director can use if the first one doesn't prove feasible.

"One of the last things I do is construct a large plan after completing the individual frames, which is basically the story in major sequences. This shows everybody roughly what's happening throughout the story."

Yet remarkably, even after all the pre-planning that occurs, some sequences are altered at the last moment. Consequently, storyboards have to sometimes be done for the editor, according to Asbury. "I haven't done any myself, but it is possible. If the director isn't too happy with what he feels the editor can do with the material, or if there isn't enough material, he would tell the editor what he would like to see, and then tell me. I'd draw the boards so that the editor could see what he has to aim at with the editing. Otherwise he could change the whole look of the film."

So when does the storyboard artist's involvement with the film end? "That is hard to say" claims Asbury. "I've only realised, to my chagrin, that I could have stayed on *Legend* longer. But I thought I had done my job, and that I shouldn't waste their money, so I left to work on *Labyrinth*." ♦

Above and below: Gotcha! The Greystoke storyboards.



Beyond



Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome would have to be one of the most awaited SF adventure films of 1985. And just as Mad Max II marked a dramatic change of style and scope from the first film, the third adventure presents a wider focus on Max's brutish new world, giving us a saner Max in the process. Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier visited the Bartertown set of Beyond Thunderdome in Australia's Cooper Pedy desert, and spoke with directors George Miller and George Ogilvie, writer-co-producer Terry Hayes and Mel Gibson and Tina Turner.



Thunderdome

GEORGE MILLER

Starburst: What are the differences in making films in the United States and in Australia?

George Miller: I was totally free on *Twilight Zone*. In many respects, I was even freer than here (in Australia), because you could call on virtually anything. If you wanted a steadycam, we had Garrett Brown operating it. (Garrett Brown is the man who invented the steadycam.) Though, I could see that if a film got into real difficult, and you got into real political problems in the studio system, it could become a real nightmare. Then, most of your energy goes on anything but making the film.

Don't you think that on *Twilight Zone*, part of that sense of freedom derived from the fact that Spielberg had a fair amount of control, since Warner Bros really wanted him to make a film for them?

Yeah. As I said, I don't think that that was necessarily typical, although it might have been. I really don't know. What it did do was surprise me with just how excellent filmmaking was in the States. I was very wary about working inside the studio. I thought all the technicians would be jaded. I thought they'd be people who just didn't care much about their work, and I found that it was quite the opposite. I found great enthusiasm and great expertise. But then, I find a good crew is a good crew anywhere, and a bad crew is a bad crew anywhere too.

There seems to be an exodus of Australian directors. Once a director makes a film in Australia and that film does well, he goes over to work in the US. Yet you've come back. Why? Basically because in Australia you can be a little more experimental with the way you work. With a lot of my movies, I found I was learning more here than I did in the States. We'd done a television series called *The Dismissal*, which was a highly collaborative workshop piece. What was interesting is that it was probably one of the most intense learning experiences that I had in filmmaking. I found that if I could do something like that here I could learn a lot faster.

George Ogilvie said that, when you met with him the first time, you were interested in finding out how to work with actors, how to get the best out of them, and that led to you having a very collaborative effort over the last couple of years...

Oh, very, very much. George has taught me an enormous amount. He's got that extraordinary thing of all great teachers. He's open completely, so he's a great learner and a great teacher.

I think there's great mystery in most of filmmaking. The writing, the directing of actors... I think acting is a great mystery, ultimately. By that, I mean it's finally, entirely intuitive. Not only intuitive because it's learned by doing a lot of preparation, but finally the performance is intuitive and open. I feel that, when I first started I had not a clue about what an actor was. Now, I think that I have some understanding.

How did it work, I mean, you and George Ogilvie directing together?

Now because we're doing more action scenes, we've split up. But earlier on, until two thirds into the picture, we were on the set together most of the time. He would take one group of actors, and I would take

Max (centre) with the children of the desert tribe. Below: Aunty Entity (Tina Turner) in hot pursuit of Max.





another. When we fell behind a little bit, because I'm more experienced with this kind of picture, I'd take over camera a lot more.

But on the most important part of the film, the preparation was basically done by both of us, with George taking charge of the acting workshop for the children in the story—52 of them! He spent a long, long time with them, three or four months.

Do you enjoy this collaborative process?

Yeah, very much. It's one of the things I liked very much in *Twilight Zone*. If you really look at it, directors never really get the chance to work with other directors. They're the only ones who don't! Cinematographers work their way up with other cinematographers. But it's very rare when you see a director working with another director, or even observe another director.

One of the things that bewildered me when I first started making films, other than the problems of realizing some kind of film, was the sort of will-o-the-wisp nature of making a film. No matter how strongly you visualize something, there's always something else conspiring to get in the way of the shot that you wanted.

When I made *Mad Max I*, I was totally bewildered by this process. I had no control of what I wanted to happen and what was finally there on the screen. I thought at the time that it was only my problem. Therefore, I thought I wasn't suited to continue in film. And, of course, it's everybody's problem! No matter who the director is, the problems are the same every day on the set.

It seems to me that it is much more liberating to work with someone you know will listen to you.

Definitely. I don't believe anybody can make a film and not be of a collaborative nature. A writer can write alone, without collaborating. But if anything is collaborative by nature, surely filmmaking is.

One thing I've noticed in the workshops we've done, and especially the acting workshop, is that I don't believe you can get a great performance, unless it results from an ensemble. It is something that the group creates. Occasionally, you might have an individual performance that stands out. But I don't think you have a true piece of work until everybody's work is elevated by everybody else's.

What is it about *Max* that's so special?

Frankly, I don't know. That's a very hard question. I think, as a filmmaker and storyteller, that *Max* allows you—or the films allow you—to go almost anywhere. But they're not fantasy films as such. Everything, by and large, is based in reality. Except it's set in some future which allows you to play around with it quite a bit. It's much easier to get into those kind of stories. You have more fun with these stories, in a sense, because you're not restricted by so much.

I know that you've read *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell. *Mad Max II* was done to specifically fit into that mythology. In *Mad Max III* we see Max as a hero because, in the end, he sacrifices himself. But he also goes into the functioning society of Bartertown and ends up destroying it. So couldn't you also call him the villain of the piece?

Well, I don't think you should talk about heroes or villains. To me, the hero is the agent of change. He is a man who shatters the world that he belongs to, and out of that shattering comes a new order. That happens to all things. They reach a functional





ripeness. Often, the people who are responsible for the building of something become tyrannical, or hold-fast as Campbell says. Then it's time for someone to emerge to shatter that world again, so that there can be, yet again, something growing out of it. So that's really what the hero, in the mythological sense of the world, is.

I noticed you used a video monitor while you were shooting. Dean Semler said it was the first time you used one. Did it help? Oh, yeah! I'm a very montage type of director. There's almost no static camera in this film. I'm particularly good from the point of view of cutting. What I find is we don't have playback. If you have playback, you're very tempted to play it back and see what happened. So you get lazy. You must concentrate during the shot to make absolutely sure that you get everything as precisely as you can, to know whether or not it felt right. If you rely on the machine, you might get lazy in the observation.

But in terms of setting up the shot, it's much, much easier to look through the monitor and discuss it with the operator simultaneously as he's looking through the camera.

Do you have any regrets about *Mad Max III* so far?

Not a lot. I think you do on everything. I mean, silly things. One day, we were filming, and there was an absolutely stunning, really stunning sky that we wanted. And we didn't have our cameras with the right ingredients to get it. It would have been wonderful to have.

And then, there are other things. . . One day, there was that incredible duststorm. They hadn't seen anything like that in five years. We just happened to have our helicopter with a camera, and the aircraft which is in the story up at that moment, so they got it. But we didn't know they were getting the shot! They were going for something else entirely. I thought they had lost it, but there was a young camera assistant up there and, God bless him, he got it!

What do you like best about filmmaking?

I like the writing. I'm coming to really like the writing! I like the preparation and the editing. The shooting, I don't think I could describe as likeable. It has its moment of joy. The problem with shooting is that it's such a continuous pressure of time.

GEORGE OGILVIE

Starburst: The films you did before *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* were all small films. How did you feel having to cope with a super-production?

George Ogilvie: It was just like doing an opera. I had a chorus of 90 with *Othello*. *Mad Max* had no problems for me in that way. I've done 300 extras before. Again, if you're used to working in a theater holding 2000 spectators, you're used to size.

The things that did, or at least that were foreign to me, were the stunts and the special effects. Obviously we have some on the stage as well, but nothing comparable to the size of what they have in films.

Nonetheless, I think that *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* is actor-orientated, performance orientated, and it was therefore very important for us to get a group of really good actors, and not only that, but

also to feed them properly. By this, I mean to try and make sure that they felt that they were contributing, not only as actors, but to a role that was important to the whole film.

"I think that the whole preparation for an actor lies in being, not just an attitude, but in being in a physical emptiness, so that the next moment fills you up. In other words to create a space whereby you can be spontaneous."

George Ogilvie

How did you help the actors get into the post-apocalyptic world of *Max*?



Left to right: George Miller, Tina Turner, Terry Hayes and George Ogilvie.

We had workshops, particularly for the children, every week-end for weeks and weeks before we even began rehearsals. During these workshops, we tried to have the other actors along with the children, and talk and do games and all sorts of things, and find different attitudes.

What is this world? Where's the difference? What's interesting, is by the time that we started to film with the children, they were already a group of children who understood not only what they were doing, but they understood each other. They weren't strangers to each other. It made the shooting much easier because you'd just have to signal and they would respond in a particular sort of way.

Did you have trouble getting the children to think, to live the fact of this future world?

No. Children fantasize all the time. We found that many of the children we'd chosen were even ahead of us, and that their suggestions actually colored the world that we were trying to establish. It was much more the establishment actors who had problems

than the children.

Even for an actor's imagination, to imagine this world was very difficult. I think it's because nobody wants to imagine it. They can only think of such a world with fear. Yet we had a group of characters who didn't fear because that world has been established for generations. So this fear is gone. We're post apocalyptic, not apocalyptic. That had to be stated carefully.

How did you work with George Miller?

In truth, I have no idea. We don't like to split up. I admire him and I know he admires me and my theater and what I do with the actors, so we just supply each other with what we know.

I shot some scenes in the film where we split up occasionally, but we didn't like splitting up. Being together has been very valuable on the set in every way. George sees everything. He's obviously in charge of the set and everything that goes with it, and I work with the actors. But we're together, we talk about the scene.



What about the action? Have you learned from George on that?

Oh, fantastically. It's been the most wonderful schooling you can imagine. I even shot one of the stunts, and I can't believe it, but it was really successful. It really worked, but I only applied the sort of rules that I'd been taught.

What rules?

Well, clarity for one thing. It's got to be absolutely clear, absolutely simple and the rhythm is more important than anything. What is the peculiar rhythm you have to film to. And all those things are helped technically, of course, with the set, the ambience...

I think also, the *Mad Max* films have their own particular flavors, and that flavor begins to seep in.

Do you feel the character of Max was changed, and has a little different focus because of you being there?

Not specifically. I always think of the first *Mad Max* as

being a film of descent, of descent of a man. There's no ups and downs, it's just descending into a nihilistic state of bitterness.

Mad Max II is just an incident within that line of bitterness, but it also shows that just occasionally there was hope for the man. Just momentarily, in the film you knew that there was probably some hope.

Do you think that the *Mad Max* films have a special meaning to Australians?

That's a really difficult question. I don't really know how to answer that except to say that because the film is made by Australians, in Australia, with Australians, and to a great degree within the film itself are people with Australian attitudes, it's bound to be for Australia in a very particular sort of way, even though it's made for the international market.

I think that the more universally one sees oneself, the more you're going to approach all sorts of things.

TERRY HAYES

Starburst: How long have you been with Kennedy/Miller?

Terry Hayes: From just before the first film was released. I did the novelization of *Mad Max I*, and that was how I met George. He seemed to like some things about the novelization, so he asked me if I wanted to write screenplays with him. I said, "Yeah, all right," and we started doing things together.

When you were working on *Mad Max II*, had you read *Hero with a Thousand Faces* as well? Yes, but that predated *Mad Max II* by a long time. I think it's fair to say that I introduced George to all of that stuff. All that mythology is pretty interesting. It's basically just story-telling. So, I thought, "If you're going to be a screenwriter, you better learn as much as you can about story-telling." All the myths are stories that have survived the longest. So, it seemed to me to warrant at least some exploration.

"... Bartentown is our world today, in a very heightened way, and also in a really pop culture sort of fashion... (the Crack in the Earth) is quite spiritual, but it's also got all that superstition and ignorance."

Terry Hayes

By *Mad Max II*, had you formulated that there had been a nuclear war?

Yeah, I think so. There's no mention of anything like that in *Mad Max I*. There was basically just that title that rolls up at the bottom: "A Few Years In The Future", or whatever it says. I don't think there was any thinking at that stage that there had been any sort of nuclear disaster. I think that George's theory was that it was a progression of the world of today into some form of anarchy.

But interestingly enough, when we came to do *Mad Max II*, *Mad Max I* wasn't out of sympathy with there having been a nuclear disaster. Working backwards, you could quite easily assume that there had been a limited exchange of nuclear weaponry in the North-

ern Hemisphere. What had happened in a place like Australia was that there had been a breakdown of social order because of what they knew was coming. So we were fortunate in that regard. But number two was a much different film, much more into fantasy.

I noticed that when George directs, each scene gets played through several ways before a final version is decided on. Do you work on the script that way too?

Yeah. It's an organic thing... It's important to remember that the script is just a tool in the making of a film. It's somebody's best guess as to what will constitute a good film, what will be dramatic, what will work as scenes. In the actual process of filmmaking, lots of things change. What will either enhance or detract from the film.

The way we work, the film eventually sees, is one in which I've been involved in the decision-making process all along. I know why things have been changed. I'm not in that unhappy position that a lot of writers find themselves in, whereby they write a script, they imagine what the film's going to look like, they go to see it, and it doesn't relate to what they wrote.

I think George would agree with me. The script is probably the most important element in filmmaking, but you've also got to be ready, prepared and willing to listen to other people and to change and adjust. Not to lose the storyline or drama, or anything like that, but to improve it. So, I think we've tried to stay very much away from this compartmentalized view of filmmaking, which is, "he's the director, he's the writer, he's the stunt coordinator, etc.", and tried to make it more of a community effort.

What about your two hats? Do you ever feel torn between being a producer and writer?

No, because whether or not you have the title of producer, it really doesn't matter. I think part of the discipline and part of the fun and part of any talent that you might have, is how to achieve things cleverly, without spending millions of dollars on special effects and all that if you don't need them.

That's one of the good things, probably one of the only good things about filmmaking in Australia. In Hollywood, we have a system that's evolved over a long period of time, and people tend to work in various compartments. They see themselves having a certain function in the filmmaking process. They have to defend their area of expertise against all comers. In Australia, because it's a very young and basically cottage industry, you tend to get experienced in a vast number of fields, because everybody pitches in and does all sorts of things.

Basically, there's one way you really save money on films, and that's cutting the script. It really comes from the script. And I guess, I know where you can cut and when it really starts to hurt, where you might start to lose the patient because you're cutting so seriously. It's filmmaking, it's not writing or directing or anything like that.

It seems that the film can be taken on many levels. Either as a pure action/adventure piece, but also, the messianic, spiritual element is much stronger. Was that a conscious decision?

Yeah. When I first spoke to Mel, I said, "Look, don't take this the wrong way, but I'll tell you what the story is," he said, "What's that?" I said, "Listen, Mate, it's Jesus in black leather." I don't know whether messianic is the right word... I mean, hero stories all have that messianic quality to them. ►



► The really interesting thing is that lurking within us all there's a hero. I'm not talking about doing brave acts. I'm talking about people who go on a real journey. Of course, with the character Max in this film, I don't think you can get much more of a journey from a guy that goes from being a mercenary — he's going to kill a man for material goods — to a man who's willing to lay down his life. Not for himself, but so that some children on board a plane can fulfill their great desire, and go to freedom.

I think that's what the hero stories indicate to us. That we all have the potential to grow, to evolve into something else, to find the good in ourselves. An ordinary man who does something extraordinary. And, of course, that's the journey of Max. He's an ordinary man, wandering in the wasteland. He does something absolutely extraordinary. That's why audiences go along and listen or watch them, because it touches that note in them, of what you can be.

There's three moments when he shows that he's different from other men. And, it's not overt. It's only under great conflict that he exhibits what he is as a man. I suppose that the function of all drama is to reveal people.

The first moment that he reveals what he is as a man is in Thunderdome. When it's such a clearcut choice between worldly goods and something which he believes is immoral. And, boy oh boy, in this world, there's not much which is immoral. But, he can't do it. And I think — I've often said this to Mel — I think he's really annoyed with himself, that there is still this glimmer of humanity within him, this glimmer of compassion.

The second (compassionate act) and I think he's really angry about it too, is when he sets off after the kids, out of the desert. For the third one, he's no longer angry. He lets go of all worldly things and just does something which is not for himself. And that's why I like the back part of the film. He knows that the best possible result is that he'll be left in the wasteland. I think he really wants to go with them.

You leave it with some hope . . .

Absolutely, yeah. I don't think George or I wanted to do something which would have an ending that would be so happy that it would be unbelievable. On the other hand, we didn't want it to be too bleak.

At least you didn't kill him . . .

No, it was originally intended to. And, as I say, you get halfway through writing the story and you're not its master any more, you're its servant. We just couldn't kill him. I honestly didn't know how to do it to get the story to work. So, he survives.

Do you think there will be a *Mad Max IV*?

Everybody asks. If the story was good enough, yeah. If we could come up with a story that was worth it. You know, it's two years of your life to make a film. From the day you start to put words down to the day you see the answer can take two years, and two years is not something to be squandered lightly.

"This story wouldn't be a hero story, if Max didn't start off as an ordinary man . . . that's the problem I have with the Conan films. You take one look at Schwarzenegger and he looks anything but ordinary . . . (he doesn't develop) from the first frame to the last, he's extraordinary."
Terry Hayes

When you look at the three films, each one stands out very much on its own. The only thing that holds them together is the character of Max. Do you think that Max in this film is the same Max as in film two, or are they just tales about the legendary figure of Mad Max?

Yeah, they're chapters in a man's story. Except, that there is one other core through it. In the first one, it's the story of a man who's just an ordinary guy driven into the desert by what happens to him. In *Mad Max II*, he spends the whole of the film as a closet human being, but towards the end he opens the door just a fraction and looks out at the world. *Mad Max III* is really the story of a man deciding to walk out of the closet and go for something.

Now, it's a difficult film to do, because part of the baggage of the mythological hero, is that he's enigmatic. So, you're always walking a very fine line between that enigmatic quality and giving him really identifiable qualities. But there's been that progression. If there was ever going to be a chapter four, you would have to take into account what has occurred to him in this film.

If there was ever going to be a *Mad Max IV*, he would have to have even more vitality than he's got in this one. You just have to take cognizance of what's happened here. He's found an affection about human

beings again, and there's no doubt that he's proven himself to be clearly a compassionate man.

What about the kids that are left in Crack in the Earth, couldn't his compassion have drawn him back there?

Well, I guess the kids that are left in Crack in the Earth are those of us, most of us in our life, who don't have the courage — It's what Carl Sagan calls the compulsion to ultimacy. The one thing that characterizes human beings, that compulsion to go on into the unknown. It would have been totally unbelievable if fifty-two of them in the Crack in the Earth had decided to go to the city. They were all happy to go when they thought that you walked out and got on the back of a plane and somebody flew you there. When they realized that you had to walk out there, across the desert, and there was a good chance that you were going to die out there, well you know, you saw the level of their faith. It became not that important.

In the Crack in the Earth, they'll never know any different, and they won't grieve for what they don't know, and they'll just stay there. But, Savannah and the rest of them (that went to the city) are the ones that will build a future.

Could you tell me about the way you see the allegory of Bartertown versus the Crack in the Earth?

When you do the story, you come up with lots of ideas and story points, and you can get lost in it all. You've got to keep stepping back and try to find the focus of why you're doing certain sequences or scenes.

That was the idea that Bartertown is really our world today. A world which is vital, lively, funny, grim in many ways, totally relying on commerce and trade and all those things. Films in many ways are closest akin to poetry, where you always try to get the maximum amount of meaning in the minimum number of words. Well, it's the same in film. You try to find the maximum amount of meaning in the minimum number of images. Comic-book to a large extent, and fun, I hope.

Crack in the Earth is a place which would appear from the outside to be idyllic when we first get there, and it's sort of mystical in a way. I suppose that you would guess that it has a rich spiritual life and all those things. But, its real undercurrent is superstition and fractured knowledge and ignorance. It looks wonderful, like Swiss Family Robinson, and all your dreams as a kid of growing up without adults and all of that.

What I think you realize is, that no world can flourish like that. It has no knowledge. It can't make the connections between things. Everything's got all mixed up. So, as wonderful as it might be, the Crack in the Earth is in its own way as barren as Bartertown.

Well the man that moves between those worlds, the catalyst for the whole of this story is Max. What he does of course, is he's exiled from this world of Bartertown to Crack in the Earth, and he takes what is good and positive from Crack in the Earth, that compulsion to alter, whatever those spiritual things are as well, and combines that with the real world. I think that what you get a sense of at the end of the story is, it's not the city being resurrected. It's not the old thing being patched together. It's something new that's going to be born out of the ashes of the old. Because, those kids have inherited whatever there is, and are different to us. They're much more different. They're better suited, probably, to the future than anybody in Bartertown. ♦

Starburst: What do you think of the changes in Max in this film, as compared to the way he was in the first two?

Mel Gibson: Well, for a start, he's older and he's more world-weary. I think he's also a lot more open to change.

Have you hypothesized what happened between *Mad Max II* and *Mad Max III*?

Yeah, but not in great detail. Just the way the world finally ran out of juice. And Max went out and caught some camels, and survived any way he could. Came across people, and they traded a few things. There's not much civilization out there. It's just basically a nomadic existence.

Do you think he's done things he's ashamed of, or doesn't he feel shame anymore?

No. It's purely survival now. One thing about the character, even though he's a killer, he does have a code of ethics. But that code is one that is adjusted for that environment where killing can be justified.

After *Mad Max II*, were you concerned about being too stereotyped if you would do a *Mad Max III*?

No. I don't worry about it. I know it's four years apart. I always fill in the time with lots of other roles.

Would you do a *Mad Max* film no matter what, or would there have to be a script that you liked?

It would definitely have to be something that was going somewhere else. Like, for instance, *Mad Max II* was removed from the first one. It was better, it was neater, it was a different kind of story. And I think that *Mad Max III* has evolved into something much bigger. It's a much broader tale and it's a lot deeper as well.

Are there certain genres that you haven't done that you'd like to try? You haven't done a comedy, for instance...

This film is the closest thing to a comedy I've done! (laughter)

A lot of people are saying that. The other two films were pretty grim.

I thought the second one was pretty funny myself. But not as funny as this one. The first one wasn't funny at all. It was almost a little relentless. But *Mad Max II* approached comic proportions. Just the way the whole thing was

over the top and divorced from reality. This one had got the same sorts of things in it, like bad taste jokes almost. I think it's much funnier.

What do you think of your costume in *Mad Max III*? You look a bit like Jesus...

Yeah, I sort of noticed that myself. I didn't realize I was looking that way until I saw a couple of shots. It looks a bit like the forty days in the desert... It's not a bad thing. The *Max* films have also influenced so much music, the look and the style of music. They've influenced a lot of people.

One of the things about *Mad Max III* is that you can accept it just on the action aspect, or look into it more for what George Miller and Terry Hayes are trying to say.

I think what they're trying to say is very clear. They're marrying the two things very smartly. The message and the action that goes with it. It's not shoving it down your throat.

How's George Miller as an actor's director?

He's very good. He doesn't think he is, but he is. He's got his own way of dealing with that, which is perfectly fine as long as you can crack his code a little bit. Because I think the dominant force in him is as an artist and a filmmaker, not as an actor's director. He achieves performances through framing. He can do that so he can alter you somehow and it works even better. ♦

MEL GIBSON



TINA TURNER

Starburst: How did you first decide you wanted a part in *Mad Max III*, and how did they come to you?

Time Turner: George had written a part in the script for me. The part of Auntie Entity. He saw an interview I had done here in Australia two years ago, which inspired him to write the part. When he was ready to cast it, he was stuck with having to cast me, and he was worried because I'm not a professional actress. It's really my first scripted dialogue.

I was excited because it's my type of film. It's just the kind of film I would have wanted as my first movie.

Why did you decide to go into acting?

I've always wanted to! That's my priority, even before singing, because I've been singing my whole life. That wasn't a desire. But acting was like another whole world.

Do you think you could have used your singing career as a stepping stone earlier, or was it a question of waiting for the right role?

It wasn't a matter of waiting. It's just that the opportunity didn't present itself. The part of the Acid Queen in *Tommy* came years ago, which was very good for that type of film. But this is nothing compared to *Mad Max III*. I haven't had anything offered as good as this.

Do you think this will lead to you getting to do more pictures?

I definitely think it could, yes. Because it's a very physical part, and also because it's straight drama. I think I represented myself well for my first movie, and any good director should be able to see the possibilities.

What kind of roles would you like to get?

Well, I think a space movie would be great! Or something requiring a very strong part, like that of a warrior woman. I'd certainly like to do more work for George. I like what he does. I think he could really come up with something different for me other than *Mad Max*.

What was the most difficult part of the film for you?

Stepping into the part of Entity was difficult. It wasn't like watching another character and copying it. It was like being it for the first time. There was a difference working for a camera too. When you work live on stage, all your moves have to be bigger. For a camera, everything has to be smaller.

What would you say you enjoyed the most about making *Mad Max III*?

Actually, to be honest, it was the physical part. It was the part where Entity is trying to get the little man (Master) back. With all the cars, and all the imperial guards there... It was an ecstatic, crazy part.

How did you prepare for your role as Entity?

I could relate to it, first of all, because of Entity's way of life. It's very much like mine... her life, the struggle... I sort of did that in the last eight years of my life... The only hard part was being very still.

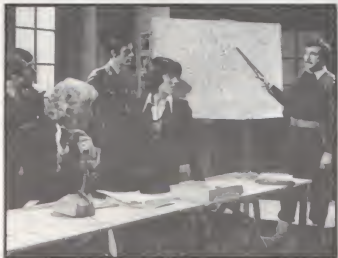
But otherwise, there were no preparations. As soon as the costume and the hair, and all the make-up were on, I just sort of became that queen. There's something about the costume, and everyone's attitude, that immediately transform you. ♦

Long before *Doctor Who* set out on his travels through time and space, British television audiences were being thrilled by another science fiction serial. This came from Rediffusion television and was called *Pathfinders in Space*. The stars were Peter Williams as Professor Wedgwood, Gerald Flood as science journalist Conway Henderson and Pamela Barney as Professor Meadows. Along for the ride to the moon was Wedgwood's son Geoffrey (Stuart Guidotti) and Hamlet, their pet hamster.

The trip to the moon and back, from a secret base on a Scottish island, was fraught with danger, including being trapped in dark subterranean caverns deep below the surface of the moon. But all's well that ends well. So well in fact, that scriptwriter Eric Paice and Malcolm Hulke decide to send their intrepid heroes into space once more, and a sequel entitled *Pathfinders to Mars* appeared the following year.

In the sequel Professor Wedgwood has broken his arm and is therefore unable to pilot his new inter-stellar craft. He decides to entrust the job to Henderson. But as the crew once more prepare for a trip into deep space, a mystery develops as to the whereabouts of an Australian scientist, Professor Hawkins, who is supposed to be joining the flight. Unfortunately for our heroes the real professor (Bernard Horsfall) has been decoyed to London, and the group are joined by a fanatical imposter, Harcourt Brown, portrayed by George Coulouris. His is determined to prove there is life on Mars, whatever the cost, and seriously endangers the lives of his crew members.

Although Mars is discovered to be a combination of airless deserts and dust storms, the expedition heads for the martian poles hoping to find a life-preserving water supply. But the journey proves to be a dangerous one, as the so-called lifeless vistas of the martian surface spew forth terrifying tentacled lichens that envelop and trap their victims. These nasty looking plants were built for the series by designer David Gillespie. "Our studios at Teddington will be transformed into a chilly Martian landscape. The quicksands will be formed from foam plastic, as well as the lichen covered rocks." Most impressive of all is the 20ft high two-deck spaceship. Resembling a giant cannister, it has a control room above the living quarters with a laddered hatchway between the two.



Above: *Doctor Who* in the *Invasion of the Dinosaurs*. Judging by Elisabeth Sladen's expression a *Tyrannosaurus* is lurking just off camera!

The same space craft was used again for another six-part sequel the following year. Called *Pathfinders to Venus*, it was visually more exciting than the previous stories, as the team of explorers fought to survive against all manner of creatures

TA TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss

in the steaming jungles on the mist-shrouded surface of Venus. In one frightening sequence, a strange ape creature hammered on the side of the ship, fusing the lights, after attempting to force its way through the emergency hatch. Apart from the use of some impressive looking miniatures and studio interiors, the producers of *Pathfinders to Venus* were able to borrow stock footage from a 1954 Czechoslovakian film by master of fantasy Karel Zeman, called *A Journey into the Primeval Ages*. These extracts included excellent stop motion photography of dinosaurs and other primordial creatures. Our heroes were chased by vicious pterodactyls and witnessed the battle between a giant stegosaurus and tyrannosaurus. As it's doubtful whether prints of the *Pathfinders* serials still exist, some of that tremendous monster footage can still be seen in a re-edited version of the Zeman film, called *Journey to the Beginning of Time*, released in America by New Trends Associates in 1966.

DINOSAUR SCRAPBOOK

Still on the subject of dinosaurs on television, Donald F. Glut has some interesting comments to make on the subject in his magnificent *Dinosaur Scrapbook*, published in 1980. He noted that four early Fifties space operas included dinosaurs. Evidently the effects were quite adequate for their day considering that all television was broadcast live.

On *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet*, the three young heroes, Tom (Frankie Thomas), Roger (Jan Merlin) and Astro (Al

Markham) encountered spectacular-looking dinosaurs, which unfortunately remained quite motionless, due to their having been borrowed from a natural history museum. One or two mid-Fifties serials on American television featured dinosaurs, mostly courtesy of stock footage from the feature film *One Million BC*, the most popular dinosaur movie (apart from the silent version of *The Lost World*), before Ray Harryhausen immortalised prehistoric animals in films such as *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, *One Million Years BC* and *The Valley of Gwangi*.

Of the animated variety, Hanna-Barbera gave us *The Flintstones*, featuring all manner of Jurassic creatures, not forgetting Dino, Fred's pet dinosaur, and later on, series such as *Dino Boy*, *The Mighty Mightor*, *Captain Caveman* and *The Teen Angels* and *Johnny Quest*. Back with live action, *Land of the Lost* was a popular show from producers Sid and Marty Krofft, although it was never screened in Britain, the first season did become number one in the prestigious Nielsen television ratings. The humans were shot on videotape and later combined with stop motion dinosaur footage filmed at Gene Warren's Excelsior Animated Moving Pictures Studio. Another dinosaur, this time a man in a suit, cropped up in a made-for-television movie from Rankin Bass productions. Entitled *The Last Dinosaur*, it has never been shown on British television. The film had some interesting effects work, but the tyrannosaurus of the story tended to remind one of the Japanese monsters created by Tsubaraya Productions. Which isn't surprising really when you consider that *The Last Dinosaur* was designed in Japan!

Here in Britain, *Doctor Who* (Jon Pertwee) encountered dinosaurs in the six-part story *Invasion*, when a group of fanatical scientists were experimenting with time travel by bringing prehistoric animals forward into present day London. There are some interesting video effects, although at times the dinosaurs have the appearance of being manipulated from off screen by invisible technicians. Back in the early Sixties ITV also gave us *The Monsters*, a serial about surviving prehistoric animals rising from the mysterious depths of Loch Ness to cause havoc and mayhem. As this is another 'lost' programme, very little is known about it, but anybody out there who grew up through the early Sixties will, I'm certain, remember it well.

However, with the exception of one-off educational specials, dinosaurs on British screens tend to be neglected by science fiction film-makers. The last successful attempt at portraying prehistoric denizens was ITV's *The Dinosaur Trail* with John Noakes. Probably ignored by the majority of fantasy film buffs as just another children's programme, *The*

Dinosaur Trail was a superb series studying dinosaurs in the media with countless extracts from television and film. Otherwise, until the ITV channels get round to re-screening the Irwin Allen series such as *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *The Time Tunnel*, the wait will be a long one. Not so however, for viewers of the cable channel Sky. They have bought seasons two and three of *Lost Space* and will be showing it in the very near future. So remember to keep an eye out for those famous frill necked lizards (more stock footage, this time from the 1960 *Lost World* film) making cameo appearances in season three. Believe me it's worth it.



Above: A Charkham and Carpenter production - Robin of Sherwood. Grisly Guy of Gisbourne (Robert Addie) takes on an early terrorist. Below: June Lockhart is pursued by a prehistoric(?) furry in *Lost in Space*.

FAN-AID (NORTH)

Fan-Aid North is a British Tele-fantasy event to be held on 2nd November in Leeds, with the intention to raise as much money as possible for the starving in Africa.

Fan-Aid has already raised near to £1,000 to assist famine relief in Ethiopia, and other severely drought-stricken areas of the third world.

The event will be held at the Griffin Hotel, Leeds. Brian Clemens, Esta Charkham (the producer of *Robin of Sherwood*, and casting director on *The New Avengers*), Richard Carpenter, David Lloyd, Tim Quinn, and John Ridgway, Graham Williams, the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, Dennis Spooner and Louise Jameson will all be appearing.

For more details please write (enclosing a stamped addressed envelope) to Andrew Smaje/Paul West, Fan-Aid (North), 39 Kingsley Crescent, Birkenshaw, Bradford, W. Yorkshire BD11 2NJ. Cost of attendance is £5. ♦



Beauty &



While fairy tales brought to the screen may technically pale somewhat in comparison with the 'magic' of modern special effects, Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* is yet to be seriously challenged for the mantle of "the greatest fantasy film of all". Earlier this year a new 35 mm print was released to mark the film's fortieth anniversary. **Malcolm Smith** looks at the poetry and passion of Cocteau's classic adaptation.

Forty years ago Jean Cocteau made *Beauty and the Beast*, and in so doing, provided his audience with some insights into the cultural meaning of fairy-tales and legends.

He chose the story – of a cursed monster transformed by the purity of love – because he claimed it was the one which fitted in with his personal mythology. He saw his role as a sort of living parable – a conception of the artist as not so much an entertainer or maker, but more as a kind of priest – acting out a myth of his own creation.

Cocteau was a poet, and as his films *Orpheus* and *The Testament of Orpheus* show, he was fatally attracted to mythological heroism. In the diary in which he kept a record of the making of *Beauty and the Beast* he explains "heroism" and "fate", the elements which seem to be the lynchpins of his highly personal work: "The essential thing is to try and make young people realize that heroism is the natural condition of the poet, that the poet is only a servant of the power of a force that drives him and that a true servant never abandons his master, but follows him even to the scaffold."

Richard Carpenter commented in *Starburst 83* that legends need this element of fate about them – you have to feel at the end of a story that there must have been some 'greater force' at work all along which would see that everything ended happily ever after. The heroes and heroines of legends embody this power in selfless pursuits, quests and actions which, in retrospect, seem to have been according to some plan but without their knowing it at the time.

The making of *Beauty and the Beast* was a heroic effort itself; Cocteau's diary reveals a record of near-catastrophic setbacks, accidents and illness throughout the production. Cocteau's personal maladies ranged from skin disease to jaundice, and Jean Marais, who plays the Beast, developed boils on his face due to going for hours on end with hair glued to it. That the film was ever completed is a small miracle. The whole climate of post-liberation France conspired to make things difficult; film stock was in very short supply, and work was constantly interrupted by electricity cuts. Cocteau held

the Beast



Above: The Beauty's father lost amidst the gothic grandeur of the Beast's domain.
Left: Sleeping Beauty (Josette Day) and besotted Beast (Jean Merais).

everything together and he saw himself not only as the director, but also heroically involved in the trauma of an unfolding myth. His own illness during shooting was, as he wrote, "a ferocious animal (the Beast) [with] its paw on the nape of my neck", and vanquishing this Beast was a heroic mission.

Such ideas may appear childish, and in some ways Cocteau was a kid who never grew up. As a poet he brought to the film a poetic and a child-like sensibility. In his preface to the film he makes a plea for us to indulge ourselves in the innocence of a child's acceptance of the fairy-world.

In a way, Cocteau's success as a filmmaker depends on it. His idea was that cinema was a poetic medium – that the power of both poetry and film lies in images which transcend descriptive language: "The strength of a film resides in its truthism (*vérisme*), in its *showing* us things instead of *telling* them. . . they are made to exist as facts even if these facts rest upon the unreal or upon what the public is not accustomed to seeing. . ." He saw fairy stories and myths as appropriate to film because they are part of the ancient oral storytelling and poetic tradition rather than "literature". Through cinema he wanted to make a fantasy world of magic, which is the world of fairy tales.

Beauty and the Beast was a popular story, originally British, which embodied his feeling that "mystery exists only in precise things". The best and oldest have survived due to their simplicity and imagination, and because they contain emblems of greater significance.



Cocteau, in bringing fantasy to the big screen, was effectively trying to create a visual language for the oral tradition. He liked to cite the artist Vermeer as achieving the quality in painting that he would like to create in the cinema. For Vermeer, he claimed, the subject of a painting was only a pretext "a vehicle by which the universe of the Fantastic is expressed."

But how is the Fantastic expressed in *Beauty and the Beast*?

Cocteau simply made a visual tableau out of the machinery of the fairy tale. There is no doubt who is good and bad, the characters are exact and unquestioned, and there is a clear resolution at the end. The characters are functional (with the exception of the Beast). Beauty and her family, her suitor Avenant, and the Prince are all ciphers who highlight the pathos in the portrayal of the Beast.

► Cocteau described the fairy tale style: "I seem to be hidden behind the screen saying: first this happened and then this happened. The characters . . . seem to be living a narrated life". Fate itself is the protagonist – symbolized by the red rose. It is the emblem of external power. It represents the certainty and the mystery necessary to a fairy story. In the film it looks like the one thing that will ensure the death of Beauty, and she goes to meet it selflessly at the hands of a creature who has seemed to be a merciless monster demanding human sacrifice for next-to-nothing. But the significance of the rose in the workings of fate transcends our expectations. It is the one thing that both Beauty and the Beast care for. Beauty takes the place of the rose and re-awakens the kindness and love in the Beast that will lead to the happy ending.

Cocteau reveals the Fantastic by creating the fairy-like atmosphere. It exists in moments such as the first meeting when Beauty faints at the sight of the Beast, and he tenderly carries her through the magically-lit castle – a sequence which isn't a second too long. The film's fantasy also lies in strange and cathartic scenes, such as the moment when Beauty discovers the roaring blood-stained Beast outside her room with his paws still smoking (as we are told they do) after the hunt. The schizophrenic dilemma of the Beast is revealed with great pathos; he craves forgiveness for being the bloodthirsty creature that he can't change, and being unable to earn her love. Beauty chides him as she would a disobedient little boy who'd torn his best trousers playing football; the Beast loses his temper for only the second time in the film, and you think that, yes, perhaps he could kill her too.

The Beast's incredible make-up and costume, Cocteau's armoury of trick effects, and Jean Marais' moving performance allow the Fantastic to become tangible.



*"'Cinema is not an art'. An absurd remark, made by the people who keep it from being one.
The cinema will be an art only one the day the silk-merchants no longer try to be silk worms."*



The film is famed for its special effects, but Cocteau believed that things like the self-igniting human candelabras and magic mirrors were not of themselves *fantastic*, only conjuring tricks – the magical language of everyday fairyland. Many of the effects appear quaint beside today's computer-aided wizardry, but his point still rings true: "The cinema can bear a relation to the Fantastic . . . if it is satisfied with being a vehicle and if it does not try to produce it".

Cocteau used Marais not only as the Beast, but as Beauty's original suitor Avenant, as well as the Prince. In the sentimental storybook sense, Avenant and the Prince are spiritual equivalents in the cardboard, knight-in-shining-armour way they court Beauty. It is necessary to fulfil Cocteau's fairy tale motif as a film style. The difference between them is that one is a good-for-nothing, poor and frustrated version of the other. Doubtless this is the key, you might think. The Beast, whose endearing performance is really the only human one in the film, must be the bridge between them.

There is the obvious implication that the unintelligent, impulsive animal is the reality underneath the mask of selfish man. Transformation comes through not only learning to love, but through deserving to be *loved*. The Beast is ruled by instincts – the animal one of needing to hunt for food and the magical one of needing love. It is the tension between the two that makes the fantasy – as when Beauty strokes his mane and he protests that she is petting him like an animal, to which she incredulously replies "But you *are* an animal!" All the Beast's treasures are worthless to him until he has realized their true value. The world of external attraction which they represent is secondary to virtue, love and the heroic.

The Beast is tormented by knowing he is a predator. Eventually he is released from the spell due to an all-consuming love and he no longer cares about hunger, which in turn inspires Beauty to love him.

Adults often quibble about the casting of Marais as the Prince. We share Beauty's reservations concerning the sudden transformation of the Beast into an all too charming Prince. The jolt – from compassion for the Beast to the admittedly tongue-in-cheek ending – is a hard one to take. We didn't care too much for the loafer Avenant and we're sure going to take some convincing about his smooth-talking twin brother.

But this is a fairy story, and there's no way round it. This is a world of magic and we should be surprised at nothing. Beauty doesn't take much convincing. She's a sucker for a velvet-tongued Prince in a trendy ruff and a smart pair of baggy shorts. They fly off to live happily ever after in the Prince's kingdom.

It's not difficult to see moral rectitude lurking behind all this, but Cocteau's ideas about heroism can outshine any cynicism. We all want to believe that good will triumph over bad, and that heroes and heroines will win through even though it looks like Fate is against them. Heroism depends on giving up yourself to noble ideals. Beauty instinctively knows this – she is sickeningly good anyway – and the spell was put on the Prince to make him become equally selfless and thoroughly human.

You may scoff at Cocteau as self-conscious or narcissistic, but it's impossible to dismiss *Beauty and the Beast* as self-indulgence. The project involved an unprecedented act of courage. He saw himself as his own exorcist: the film became for him a symbol of personal and national liberation – a purging of shame and guilt. "We are all paying for five intolerable years. Five years of terror, waking up to nightmares . . . of mud that has splattered our very souls. . ."

For Cocteau, the heroic world of myth and legend was part of the fabric of his daily life. He affected a make-believe attitude which drove his work with an integrity that is a far cry from that adopted by many whom we would ascribe today's heroes.



"I look at myself in the mirror. Hideous. Which doesn't bother me at all. The physical, the material, no longer matter. It is the work and the beauty of the work which must replace them. The crime would be to make the film suffer because of my suffering, my ugliness. The true mirror is the screen, on which I can see the physical nature of my dream. . ."



Above: Original publicity posters for Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*, that on the left was created by theatre designer Jean-Denis Malclès (1946), and right – an unsigned poster dated 1945. This picture: *Beauty* (Josette Day) flees the Beast.





THE U.S. SCREEN



In the second of our articles on the development of American TV fantasy series, Jon Abbot settles down to another viewing of the stylish Man From UNCLE series.

Here he looks at the climate that fostered this James Bond spin-off, how it made stars of male leads Robert Vaughn and David McCallum, and considers the phenomenal popularity of the Sixties spy series.

“What do you think? We are science-fiction?”

So speaks the mad scientist as he lowers the decapitated head-piece of MGM's Robby the Robot over guest-star Maurice Evans, portraying an ageing Churchillian politician who has seen better days. He has also had the misfortune to meet his Thatcher-like

predecessor in the somewhat more attractive, but no less dangerous form of Vera Miles as his power-hungry wife! When an old friend turns up at the bridge club a younger man by 25 years, visions of a tempting comeback swim before his eyes...

Yes, *The Man From UNCLE* was back although only as a few feature films made up of two-part episodes, which for nearly fifteen years have been Britain's only access to the 104 episodes produced between September 1964 and January 1968.

A cult series of its day, and a classic contribution to the world of television fantasy, *The Man from UNCLE* was the epitome of Sixties TV madness, up there alongside such firm favourites as *The Monkees*, *The Avengers*, *Lost In Space*, and *Batman*.

The Man From UNCLE was broadcast every Thursday evening on BBC1 at 8.00 strategically placed between *Top of The Pops* at 7.30 and a ten minute *News* at 8.50. For schoolkids, teenagers, and bemused adults alike, it was a weekly ritual in the days when a programme time-change, even for a U.S. import, was



big news, and every series had a regular time-slot.

The series launched the careers of its two leads Robert Vaughn and David McCallum, although both had been working regularly before *UNCLE*. Vaughn had made his debut in the embarrassing Roger Corman cheapie *Teenage Caveman* in 1958, and in 1960 appeared in *The Magnificent Seven* to somewhat greater critical acclaim. McCallum had appeared in a number of films prior to *UNCLE*, including *The Great Escape* in 1963 and had two excellent episodes of *The Outer Limits* among his TV credits. Their boss at *UNCLE*, Mr. Alexander Waverley, was played by the elderly and experienced actor Leo G. Carroll, best known to fantasy buffs for his starring roles in the 1955 Jack Arnold film *Tarantula* and the 1953-56 TV series *Topper*.

NATIONAL HEROES

Robert Vaughn as the smooth hero Napoleon Solo and David McCallum as the shy and more introverted Illya Kuryakin, became the national heroes of the day. As writer Richard Meyers has pointed out, Illya even started a fashion trend with his style of dress. "I imagine that will be on my tombstone", the dour young Scot was quoted as saying to the press. "Here lies Illya Kuryakin".

The idea initially had been quite simply to do James Bond on TV, and executive producer Norman Felton went directly to the source - Ian Fleming, creator of Bond. Fleming was quite taken with Felton's concept of the series. Each week, a guest-star playing

an ordinary, everyday person, would be swept into the spy milieu for a light-hearted caper with the two special agents of a mysterious world-saving organisation. He suggested to Felton a minor character from one of the Bond novels called Solo, a swarthy syndicate man who they transformed into a suave, woman-chasing good guy.

At this point, Fleming was forced to drop out of the project, partly through ill health, and also due to his contractual obligations with United Artists, the makers of the Bond films, and screenwriter Sam Rolfe was brought in. Rolfe enthusiastically created an entire world for the Solo character to inhabit, which he devised in scrupulous detail, giving Solo his first name of Napoleon, his partner Illya, the *UNCLE* organisation itself, and their chief nemesis, *THRUSH*. This was a super-powerful criminal organisation controlled by three computers operated by the enigmatic Council at *THRUSH* Central. Only one of these computers could be active at a time, with the other two constantly on the move to avoid detection. *THRUSH* employed agents everywhere from mercenaries to accountants, from money-men to corrupt scientists, all with one thing in common... a lust for absolute power.

In direct contrast to their own mobility, *THRUSH* knew exactly where *UNCLE* was located. There were five *UNCLE* bases. The primary one tucked behind an innocent-looking tailor's shop, Del Floria's, in the heart of New York's East Side. The very first episode opens with a ruthless *THRUSH* attack on the *UNCLE* base, thus allowing view-

ers an immediate demonstration of the flawless *UNCLE* security system - colour-coded badges for various levels, with alarm bells and numerous sliding doors (parodied in the spy-spoof TV series *Get Smart*) for illegal intruders - as well as the audience's first glimpse of Solo. Solo's entrance is dramatic, and became the opening symbol of the series during its first year. He is apparently a silent, standing target in the shadows, but the *THRUSH* bullets hit only a bulletproof transparent shield, the glass ineffectually cracking as Solo stands there motionless and unharmed. Defeated and captured, the *THRUSH* agents suddenly curl up and die, a suicide squad that has ingested poison. Thus the scene was set, and the situation established for the rest of the series.

ESCAPISM NOT JINGOISM

In his book *Tube of Plenty*, TV historian Erik Barnouw remarks that "public acceptance of a foreign policy based on good guy/bad guy premises may have been reinforced by a telefilm mythology of similar obsessions". He goes on to cite the preponderance in the mid-Sixties of war series (none of them set in the then-present of Vietnam) and the spy shows such as *UNCLE*, *Get Smart*, *I Spy*, and the very dubious *Mission Impossible*... but with the exception of the last, most of these seem to have been inspired more by the need for unrealistic fluff following the Kennedy assassination coupled with the James Bond fad, than by the post-Kennedy politics of the period. In fact, critics of Cold War TV often seem to miss the fact that the *UNCLE* show featured an American and a Russian working in harmony against a mutual enemy of global dimensions.

In a 1964 copy of *TV Guide*, Sam Rolfe announced, "We didn't want to do anything actually connected with the government, because then we'd be doing anti-Communist stuff every week." "It's a rather good charade" said Robert Vaughn, "and nobody is pretending it's more than that".

Certainly, there was an abundance of 'Cold War' television at the time, even in fantasy shows, the category in which *The Man From UNCLE* belonged. In *The Invaders*, Roy Thinnes' character often referred to the aliens from space as a "foreign power" or "hostile power" by means of gaining allies who might otherwise not have believed his apparently paranoid fantasies, while in Irwin Allen's *Lost In Space*, the bumbling saboteur Doctor Smith was labelled "enemy agent." Even the normally pacifist *Star Trek* offered a tyrannical race of "Klingons" not too far removed from a Klingon-style of oriental "Yellow Peril" in appearance, in the grand tradition of the movie serial *Flash Gordon* ▶



Above left: Leo G. Carroll, David McCallum, and Robert Vaughn. This picture: A scene from an *Uncle* feature film - *The Spy in the Green Hat*.

and the villainous Ming. Next to all this, and the particularly overt and explicit political series on the air, *The Man From UNCLE* was noticeably innocuous and innocent, perhaps even encouragingly progressive.

"People thought it [UNCLE] stood for Uncle Sam, which it didn't" UNCLE creator Sam Rolfe told an interviewer in the Sixties, "or the U.N., which it didn't. Finally... we had to make something to fit." The name, it was decided during pre-production, would be an acronym for United Network Command for Law Enforcement (which the programme politely thanked for the co-operation in the end credits of every show!) Next, enthusiastic about this decision, Rolfe divided UNCLE up into operational sections, each efficiently linked with the next. Sections one to eight were Policy and Operations, Operations and enforcement, Enforcement and intelligence, Intelligence and Communications, Communications and Security, Security and Personnel, Propaganda and Finance, and Camouflage and Deception! Against this detailed and specific background the UNCLE adventures were constructed. It could safely be argued that it was this attention to detail that gave the UNCLE phenomenon its strength and longevity, for all these details contributed noticeably to the programme. As for THRUSH, "it was a safety device. If I wanted someone to do something really awful, and I couldn't think of a good motive, I'd say 'Well, he's doing it for THRUSH!'. Such basic TV logic was not enough for the fan clubs of the day, who asked if THRUSH could stand for Technological Hierarchy for the Removal of Undesirables and the Subjugation of Humanity! In the face of such avid enthusiasm, the producers did the only thing they could do. They said yes!

This casual attitude toward UNCLE's prime (but not exclusive) antagonist also extended to the production. The famous, specially designed UNCLE guns cost \$35,000 for four. The THRUSH guns and other paraphernalia were cobbled together out of bits and pieces. The famous UNCLE pencommunicator made its debut in the second season ("Open Channel D!") - in the first, Solo spoke surreptitiously into his cigarette case!

CINEMA PILOT

With the Bond craze in full flow - three 007 films had been released at this time - it made sense to release the pilot film in Europe to the cinemas. This was a common practice with TV movies (*Duel*, *Baffled*) and TV series pilots such as *The Incredible Hulk* and *Battlestar Galactica* (although it should be noted that the 1966 *Batman* feature was made specifically for the cinema). This move created a curious anomaly. In the U.S., when the final format for *The Man From*

UNCLE had been decided on (its pre-production title had been *Solo*) parts of the pilot, "The Vulcan Affair", were refilmed to include Leo G. Carroll as Mr Waverley, and specify the enemy as THRUSH. However, the cinema version was the pilot in its original form, with Will Kuluva as UNCLE boss Mr Allison, and the enemy organisation named as WASP. Significantly, David McCallum was way down the cast list, not yet having attained the status of co-star. Kuryakin had originally been intended to play Tonto to Solo's Lone Ranger, in much the same way as Mr Spock of *Star Trek* was only intended to be a minor, secondary character. Instead, McCallum's part rapidly grew in stature over the weeks as the character grew in popularity, serving fortunately to distance the series even further from its origins as a blatant *James Bond* rip-off, a factor which had already caused some rumblings at rival studio United Artists, where the Bond films were made. Although Solo was portrayed as the womaniser - and of course enjoyed considerable popularity - it was for McCallum's shy loner that fan mail arrived at MGM by the lorry-load, and Ilya was the heart-throb of the day.

GOOD PEDIGREE

Contributors to the series included a remarkable number of names who would later go on to greater fame. Directors included Richard Donner (who directed over 200 different television series, including the "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" episode of *The Twilight Zone* remade in the movie, before going on to helm fantasy films such as *The Omen*, *Superman*, and *Ladyhawke*), Joseph Sargent (who moved to films and TV movies after a career in TV that included the pilot film for *The Invaders*), Marc Daniels (frequent *Star Trek* director), Barry Shear (ace crime show director and frequent contributor to the spin-off *Girl From UNCLE* series), John Brahm (noted for his *Twilight Zone* and *Outer Limits* work), Michael Ritchie (later director of such minor cult movie classics as *Smile*, *Prime Cut*, and *The Candidate*), George Waggener (a *Batman* regular after an early career in Universal horror movies of the Forties), John Newland (director and host of the supernatural anthology *One Step Beyond*, and behind the camera on many episodes of *Boris Karloff's Thriller*), Alf Kjellin (an *Alfred Hitchcock Hour* regular, and director on many other spy shows of the UNCLE period), Alvin Ganzer and E. Darrell Hallenbeck.

Writers on the series included Peter Fields (who appears to be chiefly a rewrite man), Dick Nelson, Alan Callioux (also an occasional actor), Dean Hargrove, Robert Hill, Stanley Ralph Ross (who developed *Batman* and *Wonder Woman* for television), Joseph Cavella, Norman Hudis, Stanford Sherman, and

Robert Thompson (producer on *Mission Impossible* and *Harry O*).

As is often customary with many U.S. series, the episode titles all had some sort of distinctive conformity to unite them. Burke's Law, for example, always began its titles with "Who Killed...?", Perry Mason was "The Case Of...", In *The Man From UNCLE*'s case, every episode was the something-or-other "Affair". Each of the four acts (clearly marked, in the manner of the Quinn Martin series) was additionally prefaced with a relevant quote of deliberately ambiguous dialogue from that particular segment of the episode.

Notable episodes of interest include "The Shark Affair" in which Robert Culp hams it up as a modern-day pirate stealing spectacularly useless booty, while in "The Mad, Mad, Tea Party Affair" the infallible and highly elaborate UNCLE security system is thrown into disarray when one elderly man effortlessly walks in at a crucial moment. In "The Calatea Affair", Joan Collins plays a Bronx girl who must be educated *Pygmalion* fashion to impersonate a baroness in the employ of THRUSH, while in "The My Friend The Gorilla Affair", Vitina Marcus (green girl Athena from *Lost In Space*) plays a female *Tarzan*! In "The Bow-Wow Affair", dogs are conditioned to do the villains' dirty work and in "The Birds And The Bees Affair", it's bees. Humans are also duped, bribed, brainwashed, hypnotised, or threatened into doing THRUSH handiwork: in "The Her Master's Voice Affair", students in an elite girls' school are hypnotically programmed to do THRUSH's bidding. In "The Childrens' Day Affair" THRUSH infiltrates a boys' school. Elsa Lanchester of *Bride of Frankenstein* fame dons similar fright-mask garb as a splendidly loopy lady adversary in "The Brain Killer Affair", while Eddie Albert plays a demented revivalist preacher in "The Love Affair"! In "The Double Affair" Solo is confronted by a lookalike imposter, while in "The Man From THRUSH Affair" he in turn impersonates a THRUSH official, striding purposefully into a cavernous THRUSH complex with the same air of confident menace he would bring to many later villainous roles.

In the early Seventies, various ITV regions revived the show briefly, screening a handful of the later episodes mostly from the over-the-top third season in obscure time-slots, but it's the two-part episodes that were stitched together as films for the cinema to exploit the Bond market more directly, that have turned up more frequently, first on ITV, and more recently back on the BBC. A few years ago, the BBC screened one paltry episode of the hour-long UNCLE shows and while obviously dated, none of the original magic of the series had been lost. ♦

It's a perennial problem attempting to write a piece that is not totally retrospective, but unfortunately film soundtrack albums are invariably not available until the film is released, though there have been some welcome exceptions to this trend. So I'll begin this month with a film that is still, more or less, fresh in everyone's mind, John Carpenter's latest offering, *Starman*.

In a major change of style for Carpenter this is the first film that he's directed for which he hasn't also written and performed the music soundtrack. The honours this time are taken by Jack Nitzsche, who I recall played keyboards on some of the Stones early American recordings.

The soundtrack album is released by That's Entertainment Records, from a Varese Sarabande original. Normally TER are good at providing useful background info, on their record sleeves. But this isn't the case this time, and although the full colour cover, gives a representative series of stills from the film, there is no information on the actual music, musicians or composer. Still never mind, it's the music itself that counts.

The style is purely synthesiser, with presumably Nitzsche performing, though oddly he's only credited with 'music', as against the playing of it. However, as nobody else shares the credits, back to Jack. Mind you I wouldn't be at all surprised if John Carpenter did in fact have a hand in the recording. And I'm sure that Nitzsche was influenced to a certain extent by the earlier compositions. There are very reminiscent traces of Carpenter's score from *Escape From New York*, and *The Fog* in places, especially in the simple, but memorable main theme, which recurs frequently throughout the recording.

As a break to the otherwise purely instrumental tracks, side two, track one, is the vocal rendering of that old Everley Brothers hit, 'All I Have To Do Is Dream'. This is sung by the film's two stars, and arranged strangely by Andrew Gold, whose name has popped up before in these columns. The accompaniment to the song is also presumably by Nitzsche, although remember that Andrew Gold is also a keyboard player. Whoever it is, manages to incorporate the film's main theme into the song's backing.

The *Starman* album is a fair cross-section of the film's soundtrack, and withstands a certain number of repeat playings. However I still reckon that of all Carpenter films, *The Fog* comes over the best as a soundtrack album.

Sound advice



GERMAN JIVING

Onto another recent film, *The Neverending Story*.

Music credits for this children's fantasy are shared by Klaus Doldinger and Giorgio Moroder, with ex-Kajagoogoo, Limahl, performing the title song. The soundtrack album splits neatly down the middle, with Moroder supplying side one, and Doldinger side two. Giorgio Moroder is probably the better known of the two composers, outside Germany, scoring such films as *Midnight Express*, *Flashdance*, *Superman III* and the reworked *Metropolis* to his credit. But Klaus Doldinger did write the score to Wolfgang Petersen's previous epic *Das Boot*. It's an interesting combination, as the styles,

although distinctive – especially Moroder's – blend together without jarring. The Moroder compositions are performed purely on synthesisers, while Klaus Doldinger uses an orchestra as well, in a typical German 'middle of the road' style. It's a sort of 'The LSO meets James Last' – very appropriate to the film.

SYNTHESISED SOUND

Last this month is not a film soundtrack, but a new recording by the American synthesiser artist, Wendy Carlos. Though she is no stranger to film music, (as Walter Carlos, she did *A Clockwork Orange*, and more recently *TRON*). This time it is purely a

Carlos creation, called *Digital Moonscapes*. The overall idea reminds me slightly of Tomita's (her Japanese counterpart) notions of writing (and adapting) music to fit themes, and the theme for this album is the moons of the Solar System. The other obvious connection is with Holst's *The Planets Suite*, which Wendy Carlos mentions in the very comprehensive inner sleeve notes. 'Moonscapes' forms the majority of the album, with nine separate tracks. The other tracks include 'Cosmological Impressions', 'Eden', 'Genesis', and 'I.C. – Intergalactic Communications'.

The 'Moonscapes' suite itself, like Holst's *The Planets*, takes these satellites of the planets, and weaves various themes around them. Unlike *The Planets*, the moons do not have immediately recognisable legends surrounding them. Holst took the mythological significance – not, as often thought, the astrological – of his Solar System bodies. Consequently, Wendy Carlos has put her own interpretation on each Moon's 'personality'. The Carlos recordings are usually associated with the Moog series of synthesisers, but now she is using Digital Keyboard instruments for which she has developed a great deal of the software. The idea is to build on the fact that a symphony orchestra sounds the way it does because of all the combination of harmonies of very different instruments. Electronics have always been hampered – and generally still are – in that they still sound electronic, and although Wendy Carlos isn't making any claims that she has solved the problem overnight, we are getting there. Tomita in Japan is also working on the same problem with his Plasma Symphony Orchestra.

Digital Moonscapes is still an 'electronic' album, but Walter/Wendy Carlos has always been one of the most inventive players of these instruments. This album is not her most distinctive, but is very representative of her work today, and bears further listening.

Incidentally, electronic recordings, and the work of such composers as Tomita, Vangelis, Jean-Michel Jarre, Larry Fast and David Bedford will feature in future *Record Worlds*.

Starman – composed by Jack Nitzsche (That's Entertainment Records TER 1097)

The Neverending Story – composed by Klaus Doldinger and Giorgio Moroder (EMI America 064 24 0222 1)
Wendy Carlos' Digital Moonscapes – CBS Masterworks Digital IM 39340

STODGY EPIC

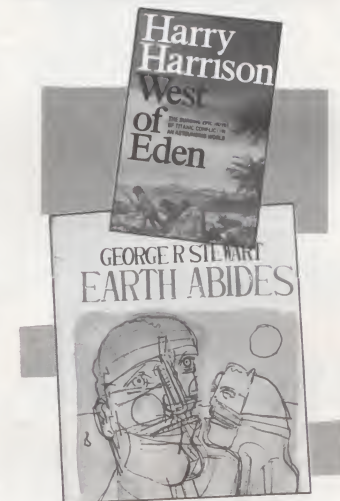
West of Eden, says the blurb, is 'The Surging Epic Novel Of Titanic Conflict in An Astounding World!' Well, I agree with parts of that analysis – like "novel", and "the". It's Harry Harrison's ambitious shot at a big, important SF blockbuster. The path of SF history is littered with the whitened bones of authors who tried this...

West of Eden is based on a nifty enough notion. By lucky cosmic chance, Harrison's dinosaurs never became extinct, probably because they banned cigarette advertising before it was too late. The Yilane, highly-evolved descendants of the terrible lizards, have a civilisation covering most of the Old World, and an array of fantastic technologies rooted in genetic engineering. The obvious thing for them to do is to discover America – which, it turns out, is inhabited by primitive people of the human persuasion, all of whom instinctively loathe the Yilane. Clearly the stage is set for titanic conflict.

It's one of the terrible lessons of science fiction that huge, stupendous ideas can overwhelm their creators. Larry Niven tried twice to construct a plot that would do justice to his lovely notion of the Ringworld, but never quite succeeded. Harrison deploys oodles of impressive research: with a biologist and a linguist on the team. His Yilane are well enough documented to overflow into forty pages of appendix. The publishers have done him proud by including hordes of illustrations in the style of Thomas Bedwick. It's all there – to paraphrase Thurber, this book taught me more about Dinosaur Sapiens than I wished to know.

Indeed, the sheer weight of research capsize the very simple plot. A lad falls into Yilane hands, is raised by them for research purposes, enjoys kinky sex with them, and escapes to join the human revolt against reptile imperialism. Of course Yilane biotechnology completely outclasses the hu-

Fantasy BOOKSHELF



man's pointed sticks, but in one of those electrifyingly banal reversals which only SF can give you, it turns out that the saurian stronghold is constructed from materials slightly less fire-proof than four-star petrol...

Conscientiously researched, honestly crafted, containing quite a few good ideas, *West of Eden* manages to be a great, grey, stodgy book. It makes you long for Harrison's old raucous wit. Where's the

Stainless Steel Rat when we need him?

David Langford

THE LAST AMERICAN

In the civilised world everything is connected, interlinked. Yet the connections that make society strong also make it vulnerable. What happens when those links are irreparably severed? Can civilisation

survive even in its meanest form?

First published in 1949, Black Swan's reissued classic *Earth Abides* by George R. Stewart explores the familiar philosophical territory of many post-catastrophe scenarios. But in Stewart's novel it is a lethal virus and not the now fashionable atomic armageddon that visits destruction on Earth. It is in this broken world that Isherwood Williams, having been accidentally spared death, assumes the leadership of an unlikely handful of human survivors. A scholar and an observer rather than a man of action, the course Williams plots for the group is one which tries to re-establish the technological, social and artistic agents of civilisation. These ultimately fall apart in isolation and through neglect; his leadership becomes a perverse joke and he is left conceding the truth of the line from Ecclesiastes from which the novel takes its name.

It is rare that a novel dealing with the annihilation of mankind does so with a minimum of hysteria. Yet Stewart's sober prose and lucid narration is compelling in its thorough analysis of the slow, causal deterioration of man-made society. The tone reflects the character of Isherwood Williams, whose stubborn bad faith and idealistic notions regarding survival, are only undermined through painful experience.

If there are a few lapses in an otherwise carefully constructed tale, they are the somewhat contrived 'test group' that falls prey to natural selection, and some overstated characterisation and symbolism. However, there are haunting moments of insight, in particular the evocation of Williams' last days/hours, which more than compensate for these.

Considering the time it was written, *Earth Abides* fulfils the basic "what if?" tenet of science fiction with as much provocative style and imagination as Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Huxley's *Brave New World*.

James Olsen

VINTAGE VIGNETTES

Josephine Saxton's short fiction is collected for the first time in a paperback volume called *The Power of Time*. Even after four novels and numerous short stories, Saxton remains a comparatively new name in science fiction writing, but with the publication of *The Power of Time* her name is clearly one which is here to stay.

Saxton has a most extraordinary imagination, and her writing has that rare quality which disturbs yet fascinates simultaneously. The stories in this volume are brilliantly conceived, but very economically executed. Nothing is superfluous, not even a syllable. A prime example is "To Market, To Market", a story which allows you to become involved with the characters, manages to make your skin crawl, and yet is less than two pages long. The power of Saxton's prose is in the deceptive simplicity of her language, which manages to describe bizarre and perverse incidents in a graphic style guaranteed to send you reeling. No, it's not all stomach-churning stuff, many tales are extremely witty, and all are totally absorbing.

The title tale is wonderfully visualised. Set in a future where everything is technically possible (or at least so it appears at first), there are actually two story strands which ultimately coincide: the narrator's story, and that of her (multi-great grandmother. The latter's romantic affair in Manhattan (after winning a competition) inspires our heroine (who doesn't like to travel) to rebuild Manhattan in the heart of Leicestershire. The parallel storytelling is used to good effect, and the end result is immensely enjoyable.

My favourite, however, is the final story in the collection - "Living Wild" - which is, among other things, a straightforward account of how the imagination can come to rule one's life. Anyone's life. (It also comes across as a wry warning

The Schmovi= 20



From the publishers who brought us Cluck! The True Story of Chickens in the Cinema comes another 'alternative' film book. This time Virgin has put up the money for a novelty title called The Killjoy's Book of the Cinema. Written by John H. Irving (whose surname, curiously enough, is an anagram of Virgin), the book casts a cynical eye over the film industry and uncovers a multitude of mistakes that have been seen on screen.

Irving reels off films that include shots of the boom mike, glimpses of the camera-crew on reflective surfaces, and views of the sound stage through gaps in scenery. He makes critical comments about screenplay clichés, contrived dialogue, and scene-setting devices; competently observes errors in a film's historical or geographical accuracy; and talks about flawed special effects, and the exploits of extras, stuntmen and dummies.

Numerous films are exposed for the mistakes they contain, and examples are given of typical movie goofs. There is mention of the Twelfth Century peasant, in El Cid who is wearing a wrist-watch. The Roman soldier who is seen to be killed twice during Attila the Hun. The noise of heavy traffic that can be heard on the soundtrack of Fire Maidens from Outer Space as a rocket nears Jupiter, etc., etc.

All very funny, eh? Lots to laugh at about the incompetence and oversight of filmmakers. The only problem is the above examples are probably the funniest references in the whole book, and most of the others Irving mentions are just unremarkable, minor mistakes. Like in The Invisible Man, "A 'British Police Station' has the American words 'Police Department' spalled out on the door." Not exactly a major discrepancy, is it? And not really worth mentioning... unless you're a boring, pedantic nit-picker that is.

The publishers are probably hoping this book will appeal to the same readers who made the Medved 'Brothers' bad movie guide, The Golden Turkey Awards, a bestseller. It might be fun to laugh at awful crud 'classics' like Plan 9 from Outer Space, Robot Monster and The Horror of Party Beach (none of which, surprisingly, are mentioned by Irving), but to find fault with every film that contains a small error is pointless.

The Killjoy's book of the Cinema, as well as being short, irritingly self-indulgent read, is also an unattractive package as a coffee-table book. It contains no photographs, which for a film-related publication like this is ridiculous, but instead features some sketchy cartoons.

A book strictly for connoisseurs of keck.

Ron Boyd

against overindulgence in science fiction and fantasy!) There is always an underlying eroticism in Saxton's characterisation, but she also manages to create an intimate relationship between the reader and her paper protagonists. I challenge anyone to put the book down without finishing a story, or come to that without finishing the book.

Neomi Mitchison is better known for her prolific contribution to the fields of poetry, drama and political analysis. But she has also produced dozens of novels, and her classic science fiction work, *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*, was first published in Britain almost a decade ago when the author was 63. The Women's Press have recently re-issued *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* as part of their new women's SF series.

The collection relates different accounts about space exploration and also about life on Terran, the home of the narrator, Mary. She is a communication expert, and her advanced powers of communication lead to an often amusing intermingling of sex and science. The absolute policy of non-interference with other cultures is pushed to its moral limit in the novel, the consequences of which produce some of the most unusually subtle and satisfying SF to appear within the form of an intergalactic adventure.

Alison Bird

West of Eden - by Harry Harrison (Granada, 578p, £2.50)

Earth Abides - by George R. Stewart (Black Swan, £3.95)

The Power of Time - by Josephine Saxton (Chatto and Windus £3.95).

Memoirs of a Spacewoman - by Naomi Mitchison (The Women's Press £1.95).

The Killjoy's Book of the Cinema - by John H. Irving (Virgin £4.99) ♦

VIDEO VIEW

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

You know the type of person who says "LPs – they'll never replace 78s" or "Compact discs – they'll never replace LPs", etc. Well – are you one of those denying that you don't need stereo films in your living room? Fair enough – if you're happy with videos being a mere "snapshot" of the cinema experience. But if most of your viewing is done in the home, isn't it better to get as close to that ambience as possible? And if you can afford a stereo VCR (as well as a large screen TV) you're as close as you'll get at the present.

Warner Home Video are the pioneers in stereo/hi-fi videos (although Thorn EMI now issue all major titles, wherever possible, in that format). And if I tell you that (among many others) *Blade Runner*, *Never Say Never Again*, *The Twilight Zone* and *War Games* are available in mind-blowing stereo (not to mention *The Right Stuff*, *For Your Eyes Only* and *Greystoke*), you'll see that the possibilities for a more total home experience are expanding. (Warners also have *The Final Countdown* in this format, but I was unable to detect either stereo or hi-fi in the review copy.)

The latest pulse-pounding use of stereo in a Warners tape comes in John Milius's powerful *Red Dawn* – a film that may offend your political sensibilities (depending on their hue), but has Milius' usual razor-sharp eye for action sequences. It's funny that nobody has picked up on the fact that this Soviet Invasion of the USA is basically an SF concept – look how the opening sequence with the attack on the schoolhouse is shot.

But, to get back to the "aural orientation" of this piece, *Red Dawn* will leave you satisfyingly stereo-shell-shocked.

Also coming shortly are stereo releases of the Clint Eastwood/Burt Reynolds *City Heat* and *Electra Glide in Blue*.

THREE FROM C.I.C.

Here's three you can't miss from C.I.C. Video. Firstly, director Richard Franklin and writer Tom Holland's sequel to their excellent *Psycho II* is the equally Hitchcockian *Cloak and Dagger* with Henry Thomas (sans E.T.) engaged in deadly espionage antics. Still in the espionage field – *Top Secret* (by the original *Airplane* team of Jim Abrahams, David and Jerry Zucker). I found this funnier than their most famous movie, with a rich garnishing of cinematic parodies and jokes that mock even the technique with which movies are put together.

But it's *It Came From Hollywood* which should grab most Starburst readers. Like C.I.C.'s *Coming Soon* this is a compilation movie drawn mainly from SF and horror films of the Fifties. And there are some real gems here – not just well-known material like *The Fly* and *War of the Worlds*, but little-seen titles like *The Brain From Planet Arous*.

The problem, however, is that everything's been shored up with an asinine "celebrity" commentary (including Dan Aykroyd and Cheech and Chong) that betrays utter contempt for all the films on view. Everything made in the Fifties, it implies, is a "Golden Turkey", and makes no distinction between such excellent

movies as *The Incredible Shrinking Man* or Ed Wood stinkeroos such as *Plan 9*. Worse still, the "hosts" make comments during the excerpts – and nobody who's suffered through an audience of yobboes supplying a witless commentary to a movie will be quite ready to forego several well-paid Hollywood actors doing exactly the same thing. Still, the clips are irresistibly enjoyable and do outweigh these drawbacks.

PALACE OF DELIGHTS

While all the major video companies have many essential items in their catalogues, only one company (or group of companies, to be precise) can boast that their movies are all a) unusual b) highly acclaimed and c) chosen by real movie enthusiasts (if the other companies aren't too offended by that claim!)

This is the organisation collectively called Palace, Virgin and Gold – and yes, it's time for another Starburst company retrospective.

It's ironic that one has to start with *The Evil Dead*, but this is unquestionably P.V.G.'s hottest genre item. And it's also officially unavailable. Of all the casualties of the tabloid generated video hysteria, this witty, stylish and energetic horror spoof is the most regrettable. (However, copies can be found – it's a discretionary action on the part of individual police stations that results in some shops losing their stock.) Andrew Kirkham of Palace (who possesses the company's requisite knowledge of and enthusiasm for out-of-the-ordinary movies) tells me that Palace have had all their *Evil Dead* stock seized – but no prosecution has followed (you may remember Sam Raimi's trip to England to defend his film at one of its trials.)



Top: Hair-raising! Harrison Ford tracks replicants in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*. Below: The Fifties classic – *War of the Worlds*.



Moving on to available material, P.V.G. has the low-budget cult classics *The Honeymoon Killers* and *Eraserhead*. David Lynch's movie will need no introduction to *Starburst* readers, but the bizarre *Honeymoon Killers* should be sought out for its murderous duo played by Tony Lo Bianco and the economy-sized Shirley Stoller.

Those who delight in the brilliant use of cinema as a virtuoso medium shouldn't miss the two films of Jean-Jacques Beineix – the stunning hybrid of opera and thriller *Diva*, and its more controversial follow-up *The Moon In The Gutter* (with the beguiling Nastassia Kinski).

MORE PALACE PLEASURES

A different kind of pleasure may be had from Ed Wood's *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, still the most hilarious bad movie of all time (the same company's *Big Meat Eaters* proves that self-conscious "Golden-Turkeys" simply lack the nutty charm of the originals.)

Andrew J. Kuehn's compilation movie *Terror In The Aisles* has some of the most spine-chilling moments in everything from *Psycho* to *Alien* to *Jaws*, stitched together with a commentary by Donald Pleasance and Nancy Allen. Now, I'm sure that many readers will say "Hey – this has the most gripping sequences from some of my favourite movies!" and dutifully shell out their rental fee. Fine – they'll get their money's worth. But they may end up reflecting that (for instance) the murder sequences from *Psycho* and *Strangers On A Train* really require Hitchcock's slow, lengthy build-ups to the isolated moments on view here to be

totally effective. The effect of the clips here, shorn of their surroundings, created in much of the mainstream press a horrified realisation that many people actually like these "disreputable" sequences; in fact, the Video Recordings Bill was steamrollered through Parliament by showing MPs a "compilation" tape of violent moments. The moral? Such a "clips" movie can be dangerous – when wielded by those who would have us watching only children's films.

STILL MORE PALACE PLEASURES

A healthy sampling of macabre Japanese classics can be found in P.V.G.'s catalogue – *Kuroneko*, *Onibaba* and *Kwaidan* make most Western horror movies look thin stuff. But to complete this P.V.G. survey, five essential items: 1. *Basket Case* – the hokey black comedy of modern horror movies, with its E.C. style monster; 2. *Company of Wolves* – Neal Jordan's furry fairy tale; 3. *Mausoleum*, with John Buechler's nicely grisly effects; 4. *Alphaville*, Godard's famous Chandler-style SF movie. And let's finish with 5. – *Brother From Another Planet*, John Sayles' witty SF fable of a black alien "Candide" adrift in modern Harlem. And I don't doubt that Palace and Co. will continue to delight us with their off-beat programming.

SCI-FI IN HI-FI

Don't you hate the expression "Sci-

Fi"? It's invariably used by people who don't really like the genre, and suggests that 'cowboys 'n' indians' in space is what they consider the highest that SF (that's the correct abbreviation) can rise to. Still, one can't blame Thorn EMI for using the phrase "Sci-Fi in Hi-Fi" to sell the video issue of *Dune*. As it's obvious that the loss of wide-screen will severely affect a movie like this, you can understand that they want to push a dimension that you can achieve in the home, ie fabulous hi-fi stereo sound.

And it must be said that as an aural experience, *Dune* can work in a domestic setting, with the magnificent visuals complementing David Lynch's eccentric vision of Herbert's novel. Despite all the plaudits to be handed out, however, it doesn't take long to figure out why so many people were unhappy with the movie (except amazingly, Frank Herbert – unless he was so relieved to finally see it on the screen!). The problem, of course, is Lynch's faithfulness to the complexity of the novel – the densely packed narrative leaves absolutely no time for real character involvement, humour, nuance, etc. We simply don't care about the house of Atreides, who seem far less characterised than Kenneth McMillan's splendidly repulsive crew of villains (who include John Nance, star of Lynch's amazing *Eraserhead*).

Mention of Lynch's surrealistic debut is a forceful reminder that the terrifying alien landscapes created in the film out of urban blight are precisely what *Dune* cannot achieve –

the sheer size of the project defies the personal realisation that is clearly Lynch's forte. Still, it goes without saying, that all *Starburst* readers have to see *Dune* – I mean, how could you not?

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

The BBFC have passed a video version of De Palma's *Body Double* for RCA (Regrettably cut, needless to say).

MGM/UA have *Too Scared To Scream*, while Precision are issuing *Journey To The Black Sun* (from the Anderson's Space 1999). Polygram will soon be hitting us with *Titanic*; the biggie, though, is Thorn EMI's *Razorback*.

BRIEF NOTICES

As I've said before, it's nice when this column can cover films which make their first UK appearance on video. But with Douglas Cheek's *C.H.U.D.* (Medusa), my threepence' worth is coming on the heels of Kim Newman's qualified enthusiasm in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, and Alan Jones' thumbs-down in this equally highbrow journal.

However, they were talking about C.H.U.D. in the cinema – I can tell you that on video, the film comes across as a lively toxic monster piece, with some quirkily well observed characters, as well as signs of the re-editing that leaves a climax almost belonging to another movie. Nice John Caplione monsters, particularly the one that tries to bite the heroine's leg even after its decapitation.

Rape, the latest of CIC's re-issues of classic period Hitchcock movies, is one that the Master rated among his failures. Two homosexual students (daring in 1948) murder a fellow student and engage in a battle of wits with professor James Stewart. Despite the undynamic handling of the material, this film is notable for Hitchcock's dead-end experiment of the 'ten-minute take', without cutting.

Embassy have issued a fourth volume of three episodes from George Romero's *Tales From The Darkside* series. This one has Romero contributing something more than his executive producer role – the second segment, *Trick or Treat* is actually written by the man who gave us *The Night of the Living Dead*.

Britain's Roger Spottiswoode, who directed the splendid *Under Fire*, preceded this with a lively thriller, *Pursuit* now issued by Polygram. This is less ambitious, but still worth your time. The leads are Treat Williams and the excellent Robert Duvall. ♦



Above left: Face-rot Evil Dead style. Above: Karate with a sound-box! Kyle MacLachlan practises the ancient art in *Dune*.

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Just when you thought it was safe, after *Starman*, to go back into the cinema and see a science fiction movie along comes *Cocoon*...

If you'd told me a few months ago that someone could make an SF film even more brainless than *Starman*, I'd have guffawed into my typewriter. But someone has. Unfortunately that someone is Ron Howard, the former child actor who previously directed the charming fantasy *Splash*. With *Splash* he was in complete control of his material, but with *Cocoon* he has gone overboard and the result is an overblown, mawkish and pretentious epic. It is a film that faithfully reproduces all of Spielberg's worst cinematic qualities (and in fact bears a strong resemblance to the awful Spielberg-directed episode in *Twilight Zone* 'Kick the Can') but none of his good ones. In short, *Cocoon* is a slick, beautiful-looking insult to the intelligence.

A brief description of the plot alone will give you an idea of the quality of the thinking that went into this movie. It seems that 10,000 years ago these really smart aliens landed on earth and set up a base. Their leader had the choice of setting up the base at either the North Pole or Atlantis and chose the latter (Atlantis in this film by the way, is located just off the coast of Florida).

The inevitable happened, of course; Atlantis sunk and the really smart aliens had to leave earth in a hurry. So much of a hurry, in fact, that they were obliged to leave 20 of their companions behind. But even though the really smart aliens didn't have the time to get their companions on the spaceship, they *did* have the time to seal each one of them in a (you guessed it) cocoon...

So for the last 10,000 years these poor sods have been lying in their pods waiting for their companions to return and rescue them. Just why they've had to wait 10,000 years is conveniently not explained in the movie ('What kept you?' 'Sorry, we too a left at Alpha Centauri when we should have taken a right...')

And what do these really smart aliens do when they finally return to earth? Do they use their superior technological powers to pluck their companions up from the sea bed? Do they hover over the ocean in their huge space ship and use the anti-gravity beam we see them use at the end of the movie to lift up a boatload of OAPs?

No. What these really smart aliens do is leave their big ship, disguise themselves as human beings, go to

It's only a MOVIE

A Column by John Brosnan



Above and below: *Cocoon* — over the hill, over the top, but not over soon enough.



Florida, hire a fishing boat and its captain, go back out to sea, lift the cocoons by hand using SCUBA gear, return the cocoons to Florida and store them in a swimming pool next to an old people's home...

IDIOTS FROM OUTER SPACE

It's rare to see a movie where the aliens are actually dumber than human beings (*Morons From Outer Space* springs to mind but thankfully only briefly) and this is about the only refreshing touch in *Cocoon*.

What happens next is that a group of old people from the home who use the pool secretly become rejuvenated thanks to the magic powers in the water and start acting like kids again, even though they remain physically old. This leads to such embarrassing sights as the 77-year-old Don Ameche break-dancing in a night club (or rather his stand-in does...)

I hid under my seat while this was going on, muttering to myself that it couldn't get any worse. But it does. The screen becomes awash with buckets of bathos as long drawn-out death scene follows long drawn out death scene followed by long drawn-out farewell scenes...

To cut a long, mawkish story short it ends with an arbitrary boat-chase (why would it be illegal to take a load of senior citizens on a midnight cruise?) climaxed by the obligatory appearance of a big, rotating spaceship with lots of flashing lights (Industrial Light and Magic must have a whole warehouse full of these things by now) but by then I'd crawled into my wheelchair and was making a speedy exit from the cinema...

Yeah, there are a few good things in *Cocoon*, such as the evocative opening scenes with the dolphins appearing out of the sea and squeaking at the strange lights in the sky, and the scene where Tahnee Welch (Raquel's daughter) peels off her skin. But these few moments were far outweighed by the sheer, mind-numbing idiocy of the movie.

No, I'm up to here with cute, Tinker Bell-like aliens who are all sweet goodness and light. Give me *The Thing* anyday...

Speaking of which: next month I ask the all-important question, What Happened to Video Nasties? And also take a look at the workings of the new British Board of Film Censorship...

Correction, that last word should read 'Classification'. ♦



The Filing Cabinet of DR. SALLY GARY

We haven't had a "theme" Data Bank for some time. Or maybe you hadn't noticed ... You really have to pay attention out there! This month, I've decided to clear a whole stack of "index" type questions out of the file. Requests for indices often end up at the bottom of the pile because they're such hard work to compile. Sometimes I strike lucky and someone will ask for an easy one. But that's not often enough!

Enough gasbagging. On to the column ... but first, here's some ...

ADDITIONAL INFO'

A couple of letters from William McNie of West Lothian and Simon Lewis of Landrake, Cornwall tell me that Linda (*Terminator*) Hamilton was also in *Children of the Corn*. Well, waddya know ...

DICK MILLER

"If possible," writes R. Matthews of Maida Vale, London, "could you please print a complete list of the films of the brilliant Dick Miller. It'll take some work, I know, but he's worth it!" Spot on, R, me old chinal Best I could come up with was a list of Miller's genre movies. Someone else will have to fill in the great man's non-genre appearances.

It *Conquered the World* (1956), *Not of this Earth* (1957), *War of the Satellites* (1958), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1960), *The Terror* (1963), *The Man With X-Ray Eyes* (1963), *The Trip* (1967), *Hollywood Boulevard* (1976), *Piranha* (1978), *The Howling* (1980), *Gremlins* (1984).

ADAM WEST

Ron Bruden of Wolverhampton is a big *Batman* fan. So much so that he wants to



Above: Vincent Price as Prof. Henry Jarrod in the Werner classic, *House of Wax*. Below: Dick Miller in *The Howling* with difficult customer, Forry J. Ackemman!

track down other films with Adam 'Batman' West in them. Why, only Ron knows. Okay, Ron, it's your forebrain!

The Young Philadelphians (1959), *Geronimo* (1962), *Tammy and the Doctor* (1963), *Soldier in the Rain* (1963), *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* (1964), *Mara of the Wilderness* (1965), *That Darn Cat* (1965), *The Outlaws is Coming* (1965), *Batman* (1966), *Ballad of Black Lace* (1968), *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (1968), *John Cain* (1968), *Marriage of a Young Stockbroker* (1971), *Eyes of Charles Sand* (1972).

RON ELY

Richard Eyer of Didsbury, Manchester writes, "I used to be a big fan of the *Tarzan* TV series with Ron Ely in the lead roles. I know *Doc Savage* was a duffer, but enjoyed Ely's campy performance. My question is, did Ely make any movies other than *Tarzan's Jungle Rebellion* (1967), *Tarzan's Deadly Silence* (1970) and *Doc Savage* (1975)?"

Not that I know of.

JENNY AGUTTER

In a beautiful letter, written on black paper in silver ink, Marla Lee, who lives in the seaside resort of Eastbourne, asks for a listing of the movies of British star Jenny Agutter.

East of Sudan (1964), *Star* (1968), *I Start Counting* (1970), *The Railway Children* (1970), *Walkabout* (1971), *The Snow Goose* (1971), *A War of Children* (1972), *Logan's Run* (1976), *The Eagle Has Landed* (1977), *Equus* (1977), *Dominique* (1978), *Riddle of the Sands* (1979), *An American Werewolf in London* (1981).

JOHN LITHGOW

A quickie from Ray Miller of Tottenham, London. "A list-



ing please of John Lithgow's fantasy movies."

No sooner asked than achieved, Ray, *Twilight Zone* (1983), *Buckaroo Banzai* (1984), *2010* (1985).

VINCENT PRICE

There's always someone who's too cheap to go and fork out a couple of quid for a book that contains all the information they are looking for. P. Brown of Pollock-shaws, Glasgow spends the best part of a page telling me what a big fan he is of Vincent Price, then wants to know if I can give a list of Price's horror films. Okay, I'll give you the list, P. But I still think it'd be worth splashing out £1.95 or whatever they're charging these days for the Lorrimer Vincent Price book...

Tower of London (1939), *The Invisible Man Returns* (1940), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1940), *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948), *House of Wax* (1953), *The Mad Magician* (1954), *Son of Sinbad* (1955), *The Story of mankind* (1957), *The Fly* (1958), *House on Haunted Hill* (1958), *The Bat* (1958), *The Tingler* (1959), *House of Usher* (1960), *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1961), *Master of the World* (1961), *Tales of Terror* (1962), *Confessions of an Opium Eater* (1962), *Tower of London* (1962), *The Raven* (1963), *Diary of a Madman* (1963), *Twice Told Tales* (1963), *Comedy of Terrors* (1963), *The Haunted Palace* (1963), *Last Man on Earth* (1964), *Masque of the Red Death* (1964), *Tomb of Ligeia* (1965), *War Gods of the Deep* (1965), *Dr Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine* (1965), *Dr Goldfoot and the Girl Bombs* (1966), *House of 1000 Dolls* (1967), *Witchfinder General* (1968), *The Oblong Box* (1969), *Spirits of the Dead* (1969), *Cry of the Banshee* (1970), *The Abominable Dr Phibes* (1971), *Dr Phibes Rises Again* (1972), *Theatre of Blood* (1973), *Madhouse* (1973), *The Monster Club* (1981), *House of the Long Shadows* (1983), *Bloodbath at the House of Death* (1984).

Phew! That's enough indices for the next six months.



Above: Jenny Agutter.
Centre: John Lithgow,
and bottom: Ron Ely
(centre) in *Doc Savage*.

Now, to finish up this month's column, I'm going to give you a chance to participate beyond the mere asking of questions (though that's what this column is really about, so keep 'em coming!). I was thinking that it might be fun to start up Dr Sally Gary's Hall of Shame. What I want you to do is rack your fevered brains and try to come up with the movie that was, in your opinion, the worst ever made. Not as easy as it sounds. Every month, I'll print a couple of your suggestions. The only qualifying factors are that the film must be in the fantasy genre and it must be BAD. Let's keep away from the obvious one, troops.

I don't want to see *Plan 9* turn up month after month. To make it worth the stamp, I'll throw in a little bribery. Those printed will receive a poster from the famous Filing Cabinet. And to start you off, I'll nominate the worst film it was ever my misfortune to snooze through... *Zoltan, Hound of Dracula*. Let's see you beat that...

In the meantime, Send all your fantasy questions to:
Data Bank,
Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.





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TIM HAMPTON *Written by* WILLIAM HJORTSBERG *Produced by* ARNON MILCHAN
Directed by RIDLEY SCOTT

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